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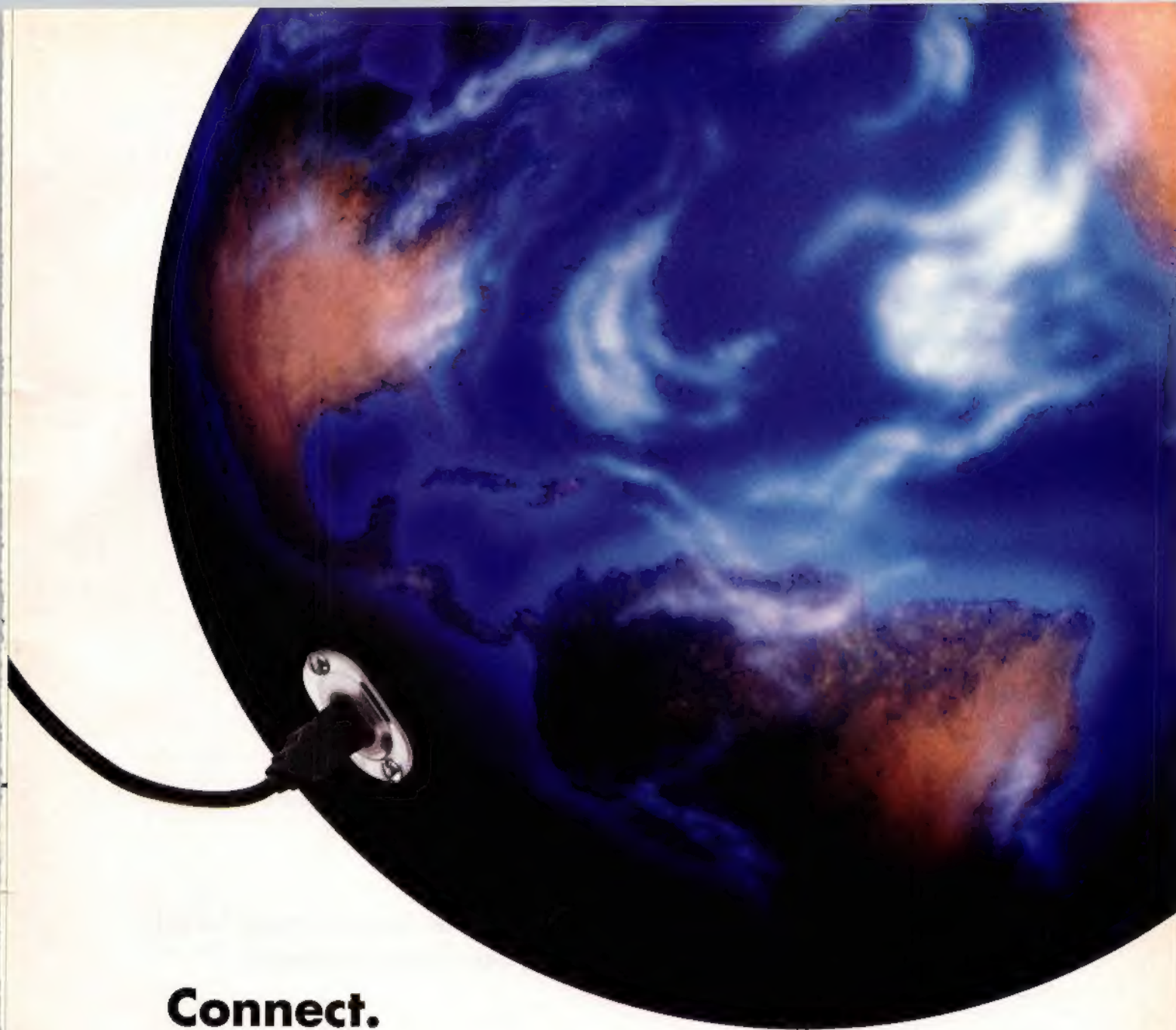
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# Guitar Player

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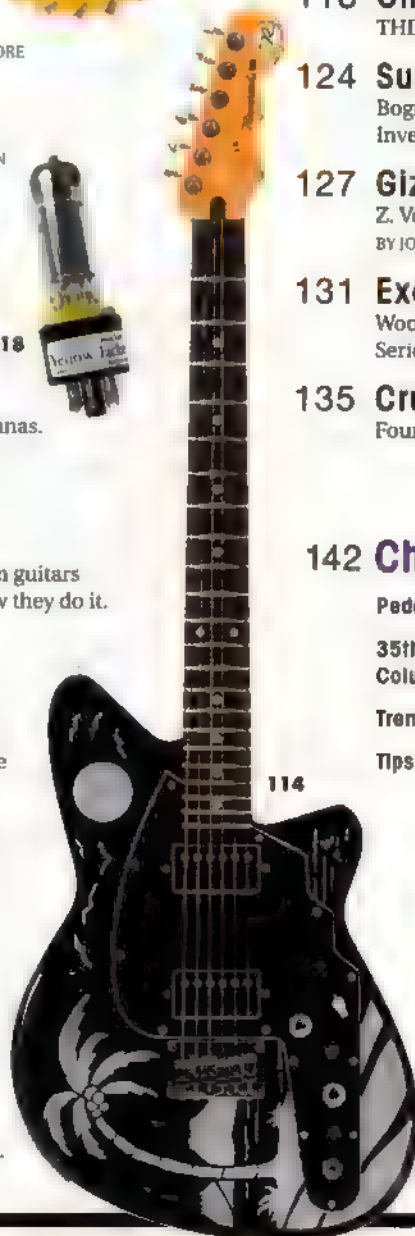
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# Soundhole The Glorious Stew of Talent and Luck

**T**oday, it's almost inconceivable that Stevie Ray Vaughan performed to a booing crowd. After all, as the last great popular guitar hero, he almost single-handedly made it hip to play blues during the new wave- and shred-obsessed '80s. And his charisma and inner fire produced thrilling live shows that were as entertaining to non-players as they were awe-inspiring to guitarists. But audible boos greeted SRV and Double Trouble when the band took a risky career move to perform at the 1982 Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland. The other side of the coin is while Vaughan didn't wow the crowd, he impressed some important people who ultimately helped punch his career into the stratosphere. To use a sports phrase, that's snatching victory from the jaws of defeat.

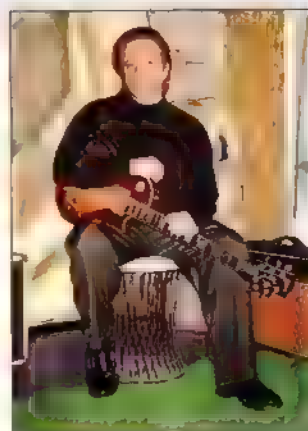
Matt Blackett's exquisitely re-

searched "Trigger Fingers" (p. 86) details how and why the Montreux gig was critical to SRV's rise from small-club notoriety to international stardom. But the event can teach us much more than how Vaughan caught his big break. Whether you aspire to stardom yourself, or desire to master your instrument without the distractions of fame, SRV's unwavering commitment while toiling in relative obscurity should be just as inspirational as his ten-ton riffs and smoking lead lines.

While it's somewhat pointless to look at history and consider what might have been, it is conceivable the Montreux debacle could have sent Vaughan slinking back to the club world. Many excellent performers and bands, when rebuked by a critical challenge of their career, never recover from the failure, and fall from

plausible "Next Big Things" to mere musical footnotes. SRV didn't have the power to bend fate to his will, but he *did* have the option of preventing a setback from dimming his resolve. He had talent and faith, and when luck entered into the deal, he was poised to capitalize on all three.

I think that's the real story of Montreux 1982—not that David Bowie and Jackson Browne "discovered" a transcendent player. It's also a lesson that translates to all guitarists, whether fated for great things or not. Why, for example, choose to splinter a perfectly enjoyable band just because it hasn't yet achieved what it takes to sign a record deal? If you believe in the music you're making, then have a little confidence in its power, and do all you can to expose it to a nurturing audience. Likewise, why give up on a song because it



won't come easily? Or jettison a course of desired study because it isn't rapidly finding its way into your fingers and head? It may seem like sugar-coated simplicity to reiterate the power of working hard and believing in yourself, but this month's cover story proves tired old adages can still work miracles. Devotion to such "fodder" didn't exactly hurt SRV's career.

—MICHAEL MOLENDRA ■

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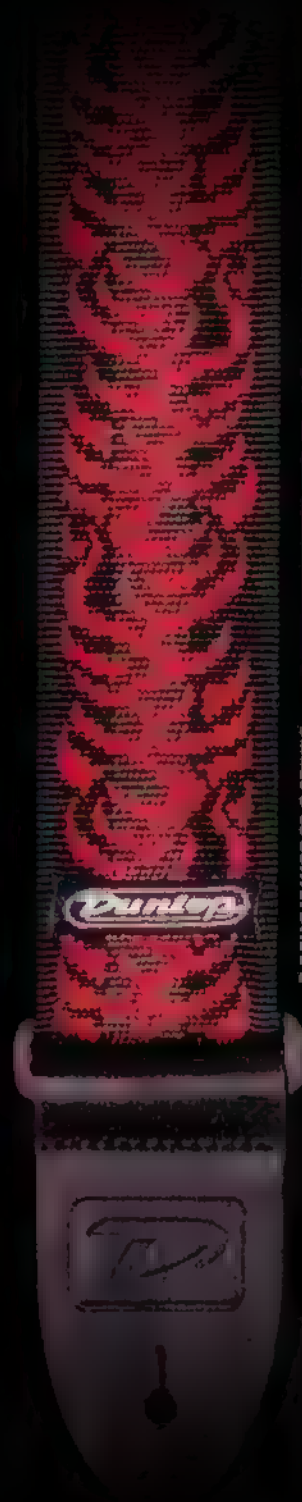


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# Feedback

## Happy Anniversary, GP!

**H**appy anniversary, folks! Thirty-five years is a long time for any magazine to survive, let alone one as focused as *Guitar Player*. You deserve all the congratulations you can get.

I could easily bash you for putting Jimi Hendrix on the cover (Jan. '02)—again—as I'm sure others have and will. But after looking through the 35 years of covers, I noticed that the Hendrix shot was more symptomatic of another problem. Almost all the covers through the early '90s were relevant to the music that was going on at the time, with a mix of fresh, new players and guys and gals who had been around but still had something to say. Then, all of a sudden, we started seeing more and more theme issues ("Is Shred Dead?" "Tone Kings," "100 Best Buys," even "Inside the Movies") and dead guys.

After mid-1997, I can count the number of fresh faces/first time cover artists on one hand. Are all the real innovators old, or worse yet, dead? Or aren't you/we looking? I encourage *GP* to take a look at this trend and maybe start digging a bit more.

Jake Kurdsjuk  
Washington, NJ

**N**ow that is a really cool thing (Elements of Style, Jan. '02). Looking through the covers, I saw so many that I have and so many I wish I had. It also brings to mind a series of *National Geographic* CD ROMs that I recently purchased. It has all the issues from 1970 to 2001. It would be huge to do the same thing with *Guitar Player*. Rather than have all these mags hanging out (don't get me wrong! I love them, but my wife is ready to kill me), I could just look up what I want by popping in a disc. I'd be willing to lay down good money for that!

Bill Leach  
Southbury, CT

## Roy Buchanan

**I**'ve been reading *Guitar Player* for twenty years and while I can appreciate coverage of what's hot and what's new, I was ecstatic when I saw the article featuring Roy Buchanan. I love Jimi, SRV, and other legends, but Buchanan was a monster player who remained virtually unknown to the masses throughout his long career. I find it disheartening when I run across players around my age (late thirties) that have never heard of Roy Buchanan. That's their loss. However, I'm glad

to see that you guys haven't forgotten one of the greatest, most inventive, most expressive, players that ever strapped on a guitar. Thanks for the feature and the photos.

Gray Martin  
Monroe, LA

## Shootout Shoutouts

**L**oved the "Wah Shootout" (Jan. '02)! I find these head-to-head comparisons most useful for deciding on the products that are right for me. Please do some more—chorus pedals, delay pedals, pedalboards, cables, Strat pickups, replacement PAFs, etc. Also, keep up the good work on the lessons. The open-G session is a gas. With your help, I can learn something new every day.

Rob Cramer  
La Grange Park, IL

**Y**our shoutouts are a really fun, informative part of your generally excellent magazine. Regarding the wah shootout, however, I have two thoughts. One, how in the world can you have a wah shootout in 2001 and not include RMC? The sound, variety, and quality of their wahs make their absence a glaring omission that mars an otherwise fine article. Two, having had many Dunlop and Vox wahs quickly fail over the years, I think durability should have been included in the equation for your ratings, particularly now that companies such as RMC and Fulltone are making great sounding wahs that are built to last.

Michael Hill  
Brooklyn, NY

## Controversy

**I**'m a subscriber to *Guitar Player*, and usually I enjoy the articles, lessons, and reviews in the magazine. However, I was taken aback by the photo of the band Dope on page 51 of your January 2002 issue.

In this photo there are not one, but two Confederate flags displayed prominently in the photo with the band. I know *Guitar Player* tries not to distill the image and attitudes of the bands it covers. But I think it's important to realize that for many people, the Confederate flag is as offensive as the Nazi swastika. It's a reminder of a bitter, hateful period in American history, one that I feel deserves no place in your publication.



I'm sure no offense was intended and this was an oversight on your part; however, it is an oversight that I (and I'm sure many of your readers) would appreciate you not making again.

A. Tate  
Seattle, WA

## OOPS!

**I**n the recent article (Brian Setzer, Stray Cat Struts, Oct. '01), our Toneomatic Bridge was referred to as a Tune-o-matic with holes drilled in the saddles. We are a small California company who make precision-machined saddles for Gibson-style ABR-1 and Nashville bridges. All of Mr. Setzer's guitars pictured have been retrofitted with our aluminum ABR-1 saddles, with the exception of the banjo and Danelectro doubleneck. Our saddles are a special design and construction that greatly enhance the tone of the guitar. We appreciate the opportunity to clarify this information and thank both Mr. Setzer and T.V. Jones for their support. It was a real thrill for us to see one of our bridges on the cover of your magazine. If any of your readers are interested in our products, we can be reached at Toneomatic@aol.com or (805) 642-5524.

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**WHEN WE SET OUT TO CREATE VALVETRONIX, THE GOAL WAS CLEAR:** design a modeling amplifier that sounded and felt great. A versatile amp that could superbly re-create every detail and subtle nuance of a collection of the world's most sought after guitar amplifiers.

We realized that reaching this goal wouldn't be easy. That it would require top-notch digital technology plus a tube power amp capable of modeling the power amp sections of a ton of classic and modern tube amplifiers. We knew it would take more than our own guitar amplification expertise. We also needed the skill and experience of a high-tech equipment innovator. From this need the collaboration between VOX and Korg's ToneWorks division was born.

Together, VOX and ToneWorks have created Valvetronix—the ultimate, hybrid digital modeling amplifier that sounds, feels and operates like a traditional tube amp. The 60 Watt 1 x 12 AD60VT and stereo, 120 Watt 2 x 12 AD120VT sound just like sixteen of the finest classic and modern tube guitar amps—with no compromises or excuses.

## THE FRONT END, WHERE IT ALL BEGINS!

The preamp sections of the AD60VT and AD120VT Valvetronix combos rely on Korg's proprietary REMS™ technology (Resonant structure and Electronic circuit Modeling System). REMS accurately replicates the complex circuitry in each of the modeled amplifier's signal paths, re-creating the exact tonality of those amps. Even their unique tone-stack networks have been reproduced precisely, ensuring that the Valvetronix' tone controls interact exactly as the ones on the amps they're modeling.

## VALVE REACTOR™ TECHNOLOGY: THE BIG DIFFERENCE.

The power amp section—as well as the relationship and interaction between the output tubes, output transformer and speakers—is a critical part of any great tube amp. To model 16 different, legendary amplifiers, the Valvetronix' power amp has to actually change itself for each and every one.

How did we do this? By inventing a new type of modeling, tube, power amplifier. Our patented Valve Reactor power section consists of a tube power amp with an output transformer that is electronically coupled to a solid-state power circuit in such a way that the all-important relationship between the output tubes, output transformer and speakers is unaltered.



AD120VT

OPTIONAL VC-4 FOOT CONTROLLER



# VALVETRONIX:<sup>TM</sup> AMP SHOULD BE.



Valve Reactor technology also has the ability to switch automatically between Class "A" and Class "AB" depending on the amplifier it's modeling. It can even select whether or not a model will have a negative feedback loop, as well as how much and what kind of feedback there will be. This adds immensely to the overall accuracy of the model's sound and feel, because you just can't accurately model a Class "A" amp that doesn't have a feedback loop—like an AC30 for example—with Class "AB" circuitry and all kinds of feedback. This is something the competition doesn't seem to grasp.

VOX's Valve Reactor technology enables the new AD60VT and AD120VT to produce the high dynamic range associated with traditional tube amps—something most solid-state power amps

simply can't do! And, because their output power can be configured exactly the same as the amps they're modeling, the AD60VT and AD120VT also do a better job of capturing the sound and feel of the amps being modeled.

## VERY COOL EFFECTS BUILT-IN.

The 21 effects in the AD60VT and AD120VT aren't an afterthought. Each one is a carefully crafted model of one of a variety of coveted classic and popular effects. These include 10 stompbox models that appear before the amp models, driving the preamp in the same way they would in a traditional setup.

The new Valvetronix combos also feature Modulation, Delay and Reverb effects sections, all of which can be used simultaneously. Just like in a pro guitar amp/rack set-up, these effects sit between the preamp and power amp sections.

## THE REAL DEAL.

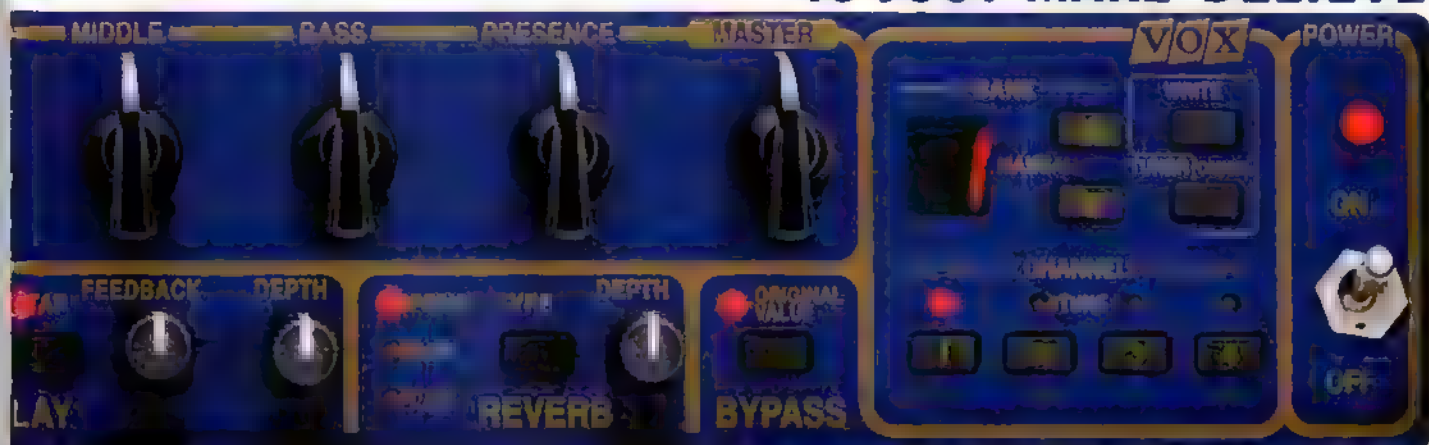
The VOX Valvetronix AD60VT and AD120VT give to guitarists what they've always wanted in a modeling amp—the authentic feel and genuine sound of the world's most sought after tube amplifiers! This, plus a multitude of great sounding effects, make Valvetronix the only choice for guitarists who play for real.



AD60VT

For more info go to [www.voxamps.co.uk](http://www.voxamps.co.uk)

## EVERYTHING ELSE IS JUST MAKE-BELIEVE



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# TOOLBOX

> > > ESSENTIAL INFO FOR GUITARISTS

## FRETWIRE\*

**IT'S A ROOTS THING, FOR SHURE:** The Shure Musical Roots Contest—held from September 16 to November 15, 2001—asked amateur musicians from around the country to record covers of songs considered influential to their own music. Although we didn't know who the lucky winner was at press time, he or she received nearly \$10,000 in Shure gear, plus an all-expenses paid trip to January's Winter NAMM convention in Anaheim, California. At NAMM the talented, homage-paying individual was the guest of honor at Shure's Musical Roots Hearing Conservation Benefit concert. Held at the House of Blues, the concert featured a headlining performance by **Vernon Reid** and **Living Colour**. For more info—and the identity of the winner—check out [shureaudio.com](http://shureaudio.com).

**... WE'RE DOWN A BIZKIT:** Limp Bizkit guitarist **Wes Borland** "amicably" left the infamous rap-metal group in October to pursue other musical avenues. Left ax-less, the remaining members embarked on a search for a new guitarist in November, visiting 14 cities for auditions and "fan parties." Commenting on the attempts to fill Borland's spot, LB vocalist **Fred Durst** said, "If you've got it, bring it on." **... MAKING THE AIRWAYS SAFE FOR YOUR 6-STRING:** In response to the events of September 11, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed S 1447—the Aviation Security Act—on October 15. A subsequent amendment proposal restricted carry-on luggage, which

## > PAWNSHOP PRIZE

In the early '60s, Kent joined the legions of cheapo electrics that stormed America's shores during the peace-and-love years. Like many of these guitars, Kents were manufactured by Japan's Fujigen Gakki, an established guitar maker that would later produce instruments for Fender, Ibanez, and others.

The Model 35 represents a stylistic pinnacle of Japanese guitar design, which began in the late '50s, and ended when Pacific Rim makers started cloning Fender and Gibson models in the early '70s. The 35's shape—which resembles a cross between a Hofner bass and a Gibson SG—is totally cool, and, at around 7 lbs, this thinline hollowbody feels like nothing when you strap it on. The 35 features an arched spruce top, a laminated-mahogany body, and a maple bolt-on neck with a slim profile, 22 frets, and a zero fret. Cosmetics include mother-of-pearl inlays, tortoise-shell-colored plastic (for the pickguard, control plate, and pickup surrounds), and multi-ply binding around the top, fretboard, and headstock. Plain binding edges the back, sides, and f-holes.

## Kent Model 35

The guitar also sports chrome-plated tuners, an archtop-style solid rosewood bridge (adjustable for height only), a trapeze tailpiece, and pink single-coil pickups that are encased in clear plastic shells. The control scheme features dual volume and tone knobs, a 3-way pickup selector, and a small switch for attenuating the output.

The 35 plays well, and, like most of its ilk, sounds absolutely nothing like a Fender, Gibson, Gretsch, or Guild. The Kent pickups are loud, brash, and distinctly voiced to yield everything from girthy grunt to weedy twang. If you're a primordial blues stylist seeking the ultimate in greasy raunch, the 35 is your kind of guitar. When switched to dual-pickup mode, this red devil delivers gloriously bawdy colors—perfect for adding scruffiness to your pristine, Fender- or Gibson-derived rhythm tracks.

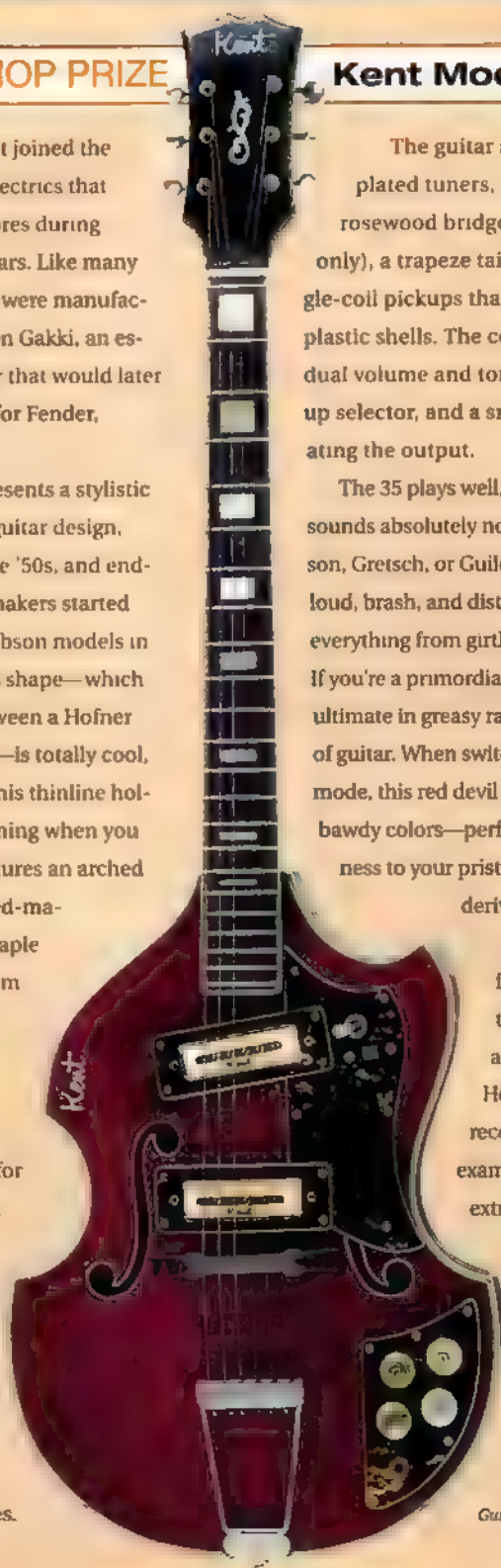
Though the 35's wack factor is beyond question, this guitar sounds cool and is a slammin' deal.

Heck, considering the \$230 recently paid for this clean example, you could buy an extra one just for parts. If

you're yearning to sling an ax that will get you noticed, try a Kent on for size.

There's no shortage of weirdos in this family tree! —ART THOMPSON

Guitar courtesy of Terry Carleton.



## > LIVE WIRES Andreas Kisser

To replicate the brutal thrash tones from Sepultura's latest album, *Nation* [Roadrunner], lead guitarist Andreas Kisser tours with six stage guitars—two ESP Horizons with Seymour Duncan pickups, two custom Explorer-style ESPs with EMGs, a Floyd Rose-equipped Fender Stratocaster with a Duncan humbucker and two single-coils, and a Jackson Randy Rhoads V with EMGs.

All guitars are set up with DR Tite-Fit Electric strings, and Kisser uses two different gauges to accommodate the tensions of his three main tunings. A set of .011-.050 strings is used on guitars tuned D, G, C, F A, D and C, G, C, F A, D, and a .013-.056 set is used for the instruments tuned to A#, D#, G#, C#, F#, A#. Kisser bludgeons his axes with .88mm Dunlop Tortex picks.

For his main crunch tones, Kisser pumps his guitars through Monster Cable to a Mesa/Boogie TriAxis preamp, a Strategy 500 Stereo power amp, and four Boogie 4x12 cabinets—two of which are miked to supply the house sound. Effects include Dunlop CryBaby and CryBaby 535Q wahs, and a SansAmp GT2 that Kisser uses for boost and sustain on single-note lines and solos. His stompboxes are plugged into the front of the TriAxis, and his rackmounted Rocktron Intelliflex (used for chorus and delay) and Hughes & Kettner Tube Rotosphere are fed to the Triaxis' effects loop via a Rocktron Hush Super C noise gate. Kisser's tech, Silvio Gomes, controls the



Three's company:  
Kisser's SansAmp and  
CryBaby pedals.



Kisser instigating  
a barre-chord  
brawl onstage.

effects using an RFX MidiBuddy switcher. Rack power and light are supplied by a Furman PL-Plus.

Onstage, Kisser uses a Korg DT-1 Pro tuner, although Gomes prepares the guitars using a Peterson Auto Strobe 490. Kisser's rack also includes a spare of every unit except the Rotosphere and Korg DT-1, and a Whirlwind Multi-Selector is used to patch between the systems in an emergency.

—LISA SHARKEN



Kisser's rack o' doom.



Four blaring Boogie cabs.



Rad to trad: Kisser's stage guitars.



# TOOLBOX\*

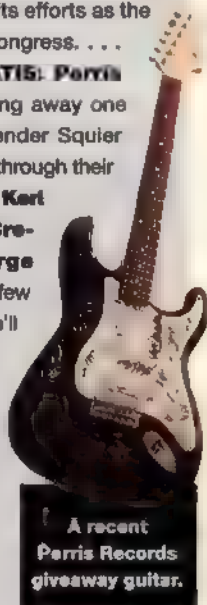
>>> ESSENTIAL INFO FOR GUITARISTS

## FRETWIRE\*

would have forced musicians to check all instruments—a risky proposition. In response, a coalition that includes the **American Federation of Musicians (AFM)**, **Peter Yarrow** (of Peter, Paul, and Mary), the **Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA)**, the **American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP)**, and the **National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS)**, was formed to ensure the needs of musicians were considered. One of the coalition's main goals was to forestall use of language in the initiatives that would prevent musicians from bringing instruments onboard as carry-on baggage. The effort was a success, as Senator Daniel K. Inouye included a statement in the Congressional record that specifically addressed the needs of musicians. At press time, the coalition was continuing its efforts as the bill moves to Congress. . . .

**GUITARS GRATIS:** **Perris Records** is giving away one autographed Fender Squier Strat per month through their Web site. **Slash**, **Karl Kell**, **Jimmy Crespo**, and **George Lynch** are just a few of the names you'll find on these Fenders. To enter, all you need to do is click to [perris-records.com](http://perris-records.com), give them your e-mail address, and hope for the best. . . .

**PASSING NOTES:** After a long battle with cancer, British luthier **Sid Poole**, 55, passed away on October 8. Poole had been making custom guitars



A recent Perris Records giveaway guitar.

## > CLASSIC RIFFS

### Gary Rossington on "Sweet Home Alabama"

In the spring of 1973, Lynyrd Skynyrd guitarist Gary Rossington found himself twanging out the classic riff to "Sweet Home Alabama" during a rehearsal at the band's "Hell House" in Green Cove Springs, Florida. Singer Ronnie Van Zant shouted encouragement from across the room as Rossington repeated the lick. About an hour later, Van Zant came up with the song's lyrics, and then the rest of the band added their parts to what has become southern rock's most enduring anthem.

At the time, Skynyrd had just released its first album, and planned to record the follow-up that winter. But "Sweet Home" was so special they decided to capture it on tape at Studio One in Doraville, Georgia, while it was still fresh. They immediately released the song as a single, and then included it on 1974's *Second Helping*.

As on the majority of the band's recordings, Rossington used his beloved "Bernice"—a stock 1959 Les Paul—and plugged straight into a Peavey Mace head driving a Peavey 4x12 cabinet loaded with JBLs. He also removed the cabinet's back panel to get a "punchier" sound.

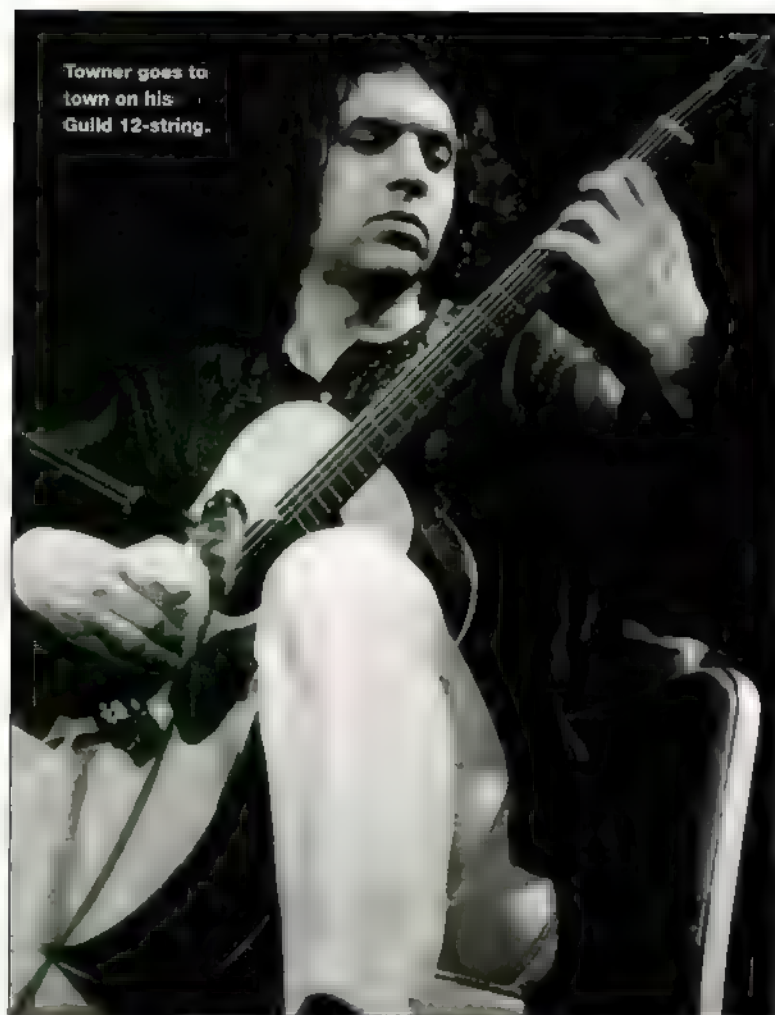
During the sessions, the band members played live from within separate isolation booths, and the group's signature triple-guitar blitz manifested itself with Ed King playing the opening lick, Rossington joining in with the lead part, and Allen Collins providing rhythm.

"When we play 'Sweet Home Alabama' live,



we always try to sound like the record so people won't be disappointed," Rossington says. "We *do* add a couple of guitar solos at the end, but they're the only things that make the song any different."

Rossington still plays through his Peavey setup, although Bernice has been retired from touring. "I don't take any of my '59 Les Pauls on the road anymore," he says. "They're too precious to be fallen over, stolen, or carted around in a cold moving truck. Now I use Gibson '59 reissues. They always stay in tune, so I don't even change guitars during the show. I still use my old 1961 SG with a Maestro tremolo for 'Free Bird,' though." —LAURA SWEZEY ■



Towner goes to town on his Guild 12-string.

**B**y fusing classical compositional chops with impressionist harmonies and a fiery improvisational bent, Ralph Towner developed one of the acoustic guitar's most singular voices. An impressive feat, considering Towner—who played trumpet and studied composition in college—didn't begin playing guitar until he was 22.

"I went to a music store to buy a trumpet mute, and this salesman guy sold me a classical guitar," Towner told *GP* in December '75. "I taught myself a little bit, then I wrote a composition for flute and guitar."

Towner soon moved to Vienna to study with renowned teacher Karl Scheit. "I feel I made up for my late start because of my intense study with him," he said. "I lived in a small room with no distractions, and all I did for an entire year was play guitar."

In 1970, Towner joined the Paul Winter Consort—an ensemble that

fused classical, jazz, and world music. "Paul wanted me to play 12-string, but I dragged my feet at first," Towner recalled. "I played classical guitars exclusively, and I was worried about the steel strings tearing my fingernails off."

Later that year, Towner and three of his Winter Consort mates—Paul McCandless, Glen Moore, and Colin Walcott—formed the groundbreaking world-jazz group, Oregon. By then, a Guild 12-string was a huge part of Towner's sound.

Towner's catalog is vast, but you can't go wrong with his early ECM solo efforts, such as *Matchbook* or *Trios/Solos*. His new record, *Anthem* [ECM], finds the 61-year-old musician still reveling in the simple beauty of the acoustic guitar.

"It's such an amazing musical tool," said Towner in '75. "It's virtually a different instrument in everyone's hands."

—DARRIN FOX

## Tracking "Seed"

**Album:** *The Beginning of All Things to End* [Epic] by Mudvayne—a remixed and remastered release of the group's 1997 indie debut, *Kill, I Oughtta*.

**Parts:** All

**Guitarist:** Gurr

**Guitar:** ESP ("I've forgotten the model, but it had an awesome purple finish," says Gurr.)

**Amp:** Marshall JCM 900 and Marshall 4x12 cabinet

**Effects:** None

**Strings:** DR Strings (gauged .011-.018)

**Tuning:** Dropped-D

**Creative Concept:** "I was just developing my style then," recalls Gurr, "and the band was laying down whatever came to us. Making the record wasn't a big, thought-out process—we were just trying to show people what Mudvayne was all about. I developed the music for 'Seed' over a couple of days, and then brought the song to a rehearsal. I wanted a raw, aggressive groove, and I really worked side-by-side with sPaG [Mudvayne's drummer] to ensure that the rhythmic pulses throughout the song's many intricate parts were really tight. Tone-wise, I was going for a thick sound, but I didn't do a lot of tweaking. I just set up my rig and went for it. What you hear on the song are two tracks of guitar playing unison lines. We weren't trying to prove anything at the time, but this record really defined our unique approach to grooves and arrangements."

—MICHAEL MOLENDAR



# TOOLBOX\*

>>> ESSENTIAL INFO FOR GUITARISTS

## FRETWIRE\*

for more than 30 years, building instruments for many U.K. artists, including **Andy Fairweather-Low**, **Bernie Marsden**, and **Pete Townshend** (who entrusted Poole to fit his Strats with Fishman Powerbridges). . . . Jazz guitarist **John Collins**—who played with Billie Holiday, Lester Young, and Nat King Cole—died October 4 of cancer. He was 83. Collins' 14-year association with Cole began in 1951, and continued until Cole's death in 1965. . . . **PUTTING A PRICE ON MUSIC:** When it comes to the price of downloading music on the Internet, there are plenty of conflicting opinions from fans, artists, and record labels. What complicates the matter even more is that musicians aren't united on their position. In October, **David Fagin**, lead singer of the Rosenbergs, spoke to the **Copyright Arbitration Panel** (CARP)—a three-member federal committee that will help sort out who gets what, and how much they'll get. Fagin—taking a different stance than the much-publicized views of musicians such as the members of Metallica—argued that high royalty fees for streaming music will limit online exposure for musicians without major-label support, and could possibly put independent acts out of business. . . . **IT IS ME, BABE:** **Bob Dylan** was surprised to find he couldn't get into his own gig at the Jackson County Exposition Center in Medford, Oregon, this past October. Touring in support of his recent release, *Love and Theft*, but lacking a backstage pass, Dylan was stopped by security guards, who had been instructed to let no one in without credentials. Finally, Dylan's security manager emerged, and the guards were "relocated." —EMILY FASTEN ■



## > MY FAVORITE GUITAR PLAYER Steve Lukather



"Reading *GP* has always been a ritual for me, but it's hard to pinpoint my favorite issue. I'm a devout Joe Walsh fan, and I remember his 'Pro's Reply' column [October, 1972] on how he got his sound on 'The Bomber' was very cool. I was in the September 1979 issue at 19 years old,

and I was tweaked to even be mentioned, because *GP* is the mag for guitar players. Then I made the cover of the April 1984 issue. Man, what an honor. (Sorry for the lame clothes!) Today, I'm still making a living playing the guitar—not bad for a kid from North Hollywood. Thanks for your continued support, and for not being so trendy. Peace." ■

STEVE LUKATHER, OCTOBER, 2001

# THE WORLD'S SECOND MULTI-MODELING PROCESSOR.



If you couldn't tell, we like being first. Which is why DigiTech® is proud to introduce the GNX2—the world's first Multi-Modeling processor with Stompbox modeling.

As the second member of the GENetX family, the GNX2 is the ultimate creative tool. Besides being packed with all of the warping capabilities of the GND and GNX, it also can recreate some of the most popular

It stack, tune down your cabinet and shred to your ears' content.

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# New Gear

By Emily Fasten



## 1. WAYNE

Wayne Guitars—recently established by Wayne Charvel—has introduced the Star (\$2,399). Hand-made and modeled after the original '70s Charvel, it features Seymour Duncan pickups, an alder body, a Floyd Rose bridge, and a maple neck. The Star comes in a variety of colors and graphics, and a hardshell case is included. Wayne Guitars, Box 583, Paradise, CA 95967; (530) 872-5123; wayneguitars.com.

## 2. DANELECTRO

Go back in time with Danelectro's groovy new line of '60s Pedals (\$149 each)—each of which comes in a 2 lb metal enclosure with custom graphics and gold hardware. The Sitar Swami adds droning, resonating tones that emulate a sitar, and includes a glass slide for trippy "fretless" freakouts.



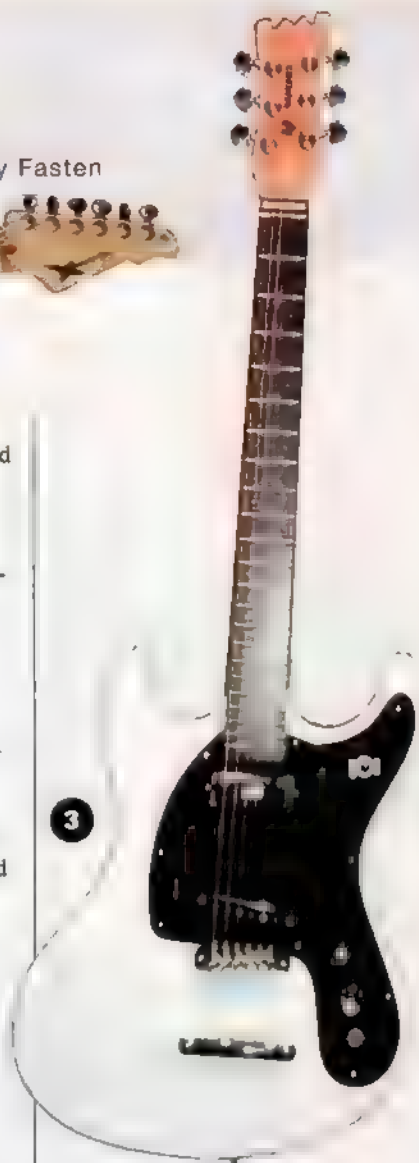
## KUSTOM

The Kustom Tube 12 (\$150) is a 12-watt practice amp featuring a 12AX7 preamp tube and an 8" Celestion speaker. It has gain, low, high, and volume controls, a gain on/off switch, a frequency-shift switch for fatter mids, a headphone jack, and a 3-year limited warranty. Kustom Music Inc., dist. by HHI, 4940 Delhi Pike, Cincinnati, OH 45238; (513) 451-5000, kustom.com.

The Back Talk Reverse Delay offers one second of delay, and has mix, speed, and repeat controls, and the Psycho Flange has speed, regeneration, and width controls. Danelectro, Box 2769, Laguna Hills, CA 92654; (949) 498-9854; danelectro.com.

## 3. MOSRITE

Mosrite's Johnny Ramone Signature Ramones 1974-1996 model (\$1,999)—made to Johnny's original specs—has been nearly impossible to find previously, as only 80 were made. But the guitar is now readily available as a production model featuring a solid basswood body, a one-piece maple neck, a 22-fret rosewood fretboard, and Grover USA tuners. The Signature has Ramone's original pickup configuration—a DiMarzio FS-1 and a Duncan SM-1 Mini Humbucker—along with a Mosrite roller bridge, tone and volume knobs, and



an "m"-shaped headstock with Johnny Ramone's signature and the Ramones' logo.

Mosrite, dist. by Oasis Music Inc., Box 41276, Long Beach, CA 90853; email: sales@mosrite.com.

## 4. FREEHAND

Freehand's MusicPad Pro (\$999) is a tablet-sized digital display that can store over 10,000 pages of sheet music. Pages can be turned either by touching the 12.1" color screen, or by hitting a wireless footswitch. The MusicPad also allows you to annotate and save notes electronically, and lets you upload and download music (using a PC or a Mac) from the Internet, composition



## BOSS

The BR-532 Digital Recording Studio (\$495) is a portable, battery-driven 4-track digital recorder that stores its four primary tracks and 32 virtual tracks on an included 32MB SmartMedia card. Tracks can be transferred to computer workstations or CD recorders through an optical digital output, and other features include a programmable stereo effects processor, COSM amp models, bass simulation, a Rhythm Guide (which provides drum sounds and patterns), and a phrase trainer (which slows guitar licks without changing the pitch). **Boss**, 5100 S. Eastern Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90040, (323) 890-3701; rolandus.com.

programs, and other sources. **Freehand Systems**, 95 First St., Ste. 200, Los Altos, CA 94022, (650) 941-0742; freehandsystems.com.

## 5. ROGER MAYER

Stompbox-legend Roger Mayer recently unleashed two new pedals: the Voodoo Boost (\$159) and the Spitfire (\$159). The Voodoo Boost includes volume, fatness, and gain controls, as well as "dual direct drive" inputs for parallel or multi-path processing. The Spitfire is designed to pro-



duce classic, triode-flavored tube tones, and has a rocket-shaped housing, a hard-wire bypass, and output, drive, and gain controls. Both pedals operate on a 9-volt battery or an optional AC power adapter.

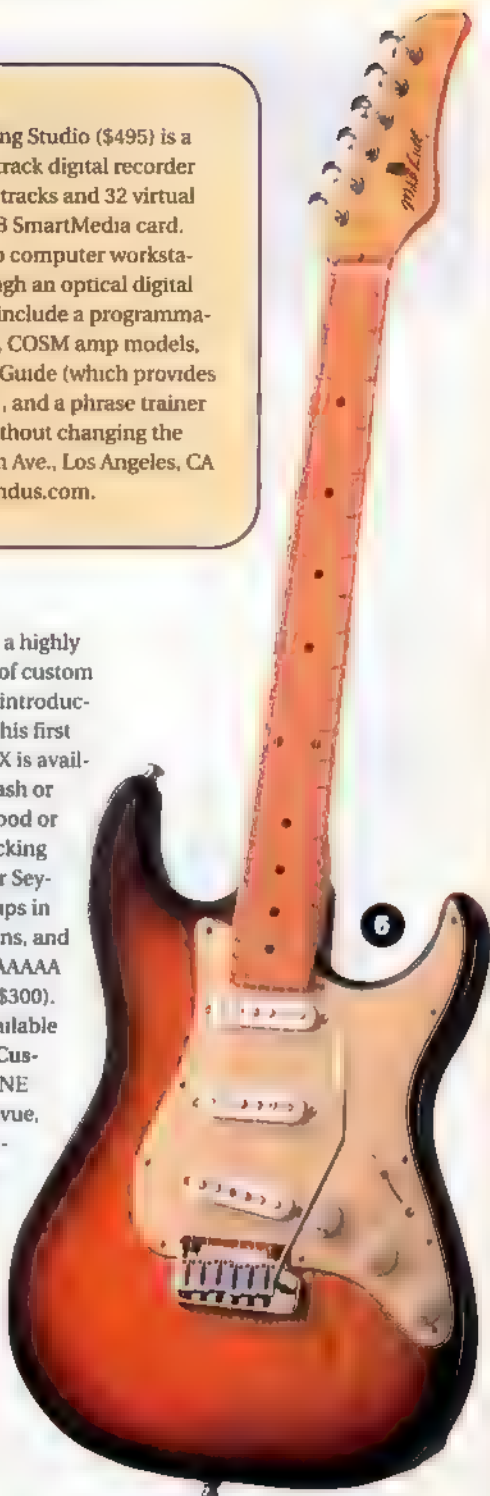
**Roger Mayer Electronics**, dist. by North Star Audio,

1118 N. Mozart St., Chicago, IL 60622; (773) 782-9666; rogermayerusa.com



## 6. MIKE LULL

After seven years as a highly respected designer of custom basses, Mike Lull is introducing the SX (\$2,699), his first guitar model. The SX is available with a swamp ash or alder body, a rosewood or maple fretboard, locking tuners, Van Zandt or Seymour Duncan pickups in several configurations, and options such as an AAAA figured-maple top (\$300). A custom case is available for \$125. **Mike Lull Custom Guitars**, 13240 NE 20th St., Ste. 2, Bellevue, WA 98005; (425) 643-8074, mikelull.com.



## VOODOO LAB

The Voodoo Lab Pedal Power 2 (\$239) is a universal power supply for all battery-powered stompboxes. As with the original Pedal Power, each of the eight outputs is completely isolated, short-circuit protected, regulated, and filtered. New features include two outputs with enough juice to power Line 6 modeling pedals, and two outputs with variable voltage "sag" to emulate dying carbon batteries. The Pedal Power comes with cables, a detachable AC power cord, and a 5-year warranty. **Voodoo Lab**, 1320-A Industrial Ave., Petaluma, CA 94852; (707) 782-0600; voodoolab.com.





# New Gear

## KINGSLEY

The Kingsley Deluxe 50 is a 50-watt amp with two EL34 output tubes and four 12AX7A preamp tubes. Features include gain and volume controls, 3-band EQ, reverb, a master tone control, a footswitchable boost, a variable line out jack, and a pentode/triode switch. The Deluxe 50 is available as a head (\$1,775), a 1x12 combo with a Celestion Vintage 30 (\$1,900), or a 2x12 combo with a Vintage 30 and a Celestion G12M Greenback (\$2,050). Kingsley Amplifiers, 21222 Dewdney Trunk Rd., Maple Ridge, BC Canada V2X 3E9; (604) 463-5201; kingsleyamplifiers.com.



## JENSEN

The Jensen Mod Speakers (\$25-\$100) are manufactured in Italy, in 8", 10", 12", and 15" sizes, and are available with various power ratings and impedances to enhance vintage and modern amplifier designs. Jensen, dist. by CE Corp., 6221 South Maple Ave., Tempe, AZ 85283; (480) 755-4712; jensenmods.com.



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## SANTA CRUZ

The Santa Cruz Guitar Company has introduced its 25th-anniversary series of steel-string guitars (approximately \$18,000 for the set), which honors three of the company's

original models. Only five sets will be made, and each guitar and set will be individually numbered. All three guitars feature an abalone, "25 Years" Tree of Life inlay. The Santa Cruz H has a mahogany body, a cedar top, Sloane Waverly tuners, and 13 frets. The D and F have Indian rosewood bodies and Sitka spruce tops. The D has a Brazilian-rosewood peghead overlay and gold Waverly tuners, and the F features gold Schaller tuners with ebony buttons. Santa Cruz Guitar Company, 151C Harvey West Blvd., Santa Cruz, CA 95060, (831) 425-0999; santacruzguitar.com.

## G-CRAFT

G-Craft's first guitar amp—the 80-watt MK-1 Compressing Amplifier (\$2,995)—was designed in conjunction with Joe Walsh, and features a single-

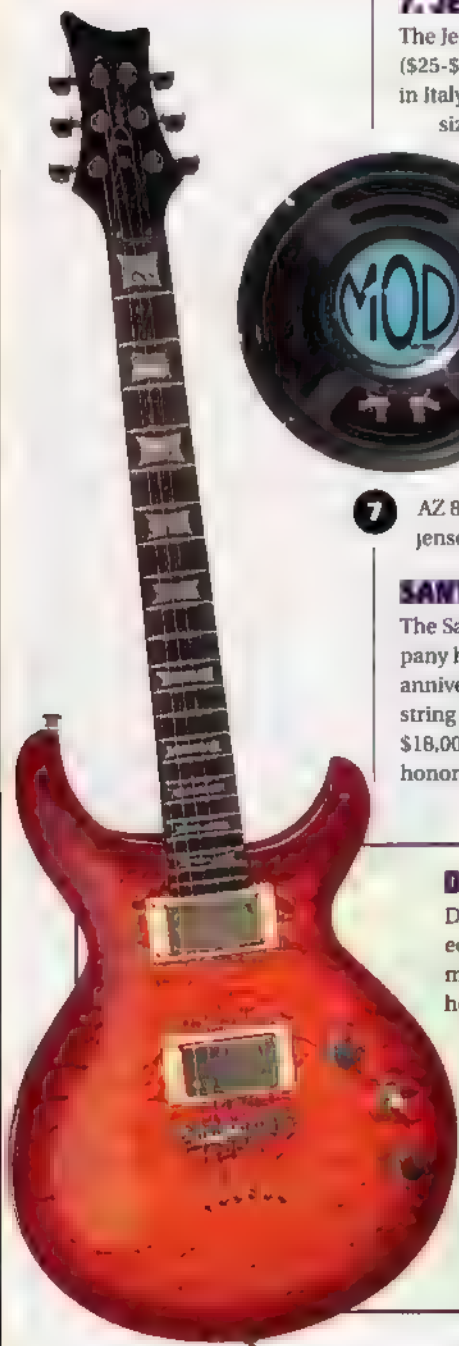
ended, class A circuit that uses three 807 pentode output tubes. The output transformer was custom designed for use with the amp's 15" speaker, and the EQ circuit incorporates multi-band compression (low, mid, and high) with a threshold control for each band. G-Craft, Box 2001, Ventura, CA 93001; (805) 339-9197, gcrafteronline.com.

*New Gear is based on info from manufacturers. Coverage does not imply endorsement by Guitar Player. All prices and specs are subject to change. Manufacturers: Submit your press release and photo with list price information to New Gear, Guitar Player, 2800 Campus Dr., San Mateo, CA 94403.*

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## DEAN

Dean Guitars has updated its Icon line with reconstructed neck joints and through-body stringing. The revised models retain their quilted-maple tops, Honduran-mahogany bodies, wood binding, abalone inlays, and Tune-o-matic bridges. The Icon Standard (\$499) comes with nickel Grover tuners and a Classic Black finish, and the Phantom (\$599) has black Grover tuners and a choice of silver, brazilianburst, or red finishes. The Special Select (\$649, pictured) has nickel Grover tuners, hourglass fretboard inlays, and amberburst, black, or blue finishes. Dean Musical Instruments, 15251 Roosevelt Blvd., Ste. 206, Clearwater, FL 33760; (727) 519-9669; deanguitars.com.





## Three generations on a Martin

Bill Coyle can't wait to jam after Sunday dinner at his parents' house with his dad, Patrick, 57, and Pop-Pop, Bill Linville, 86—all proudly and loudly on their Martins (l to r: a D-15, a D-41, a D-18).

"I first fell in love with a Martin at 13 when Pop-Pop let me play his 1937 D-18.

"He'd bought it new and paid \$3 a week to get it. He says it plays sweeter every year. I can hear it too. 'In guitars, quality pays,' he always told me. 'Buy a Martin.'

"My father, Pat Coyle, was a police officer in Maplewood, NJ. He was chasing a stolen car and got hit in a head-on collision. Dad was rushed to the hospital, suffered post-traumatic stress and had to retire. He was a good guitarist. He needed the therapy of playing to help him recover. But his acoustic guitar was a pain to play. He wouldn't touch it. My brother said, 'Let's get him a new one.' Pop-Pop said, 'Quality pays. Buy a Martin.' We all chipped in and bought Dad a D-15. Now he plays all the time. He said, 'I don't sound bad anymore.' He's improving with that therapy.

"Just about then, I could tell I was ready to buy a Martin; but the one I wanted was expensive. My wife said, 'Sell your motorcycle.' I did. Now every night I take out that D-41. When my friends talk about buying a guitar, I give 'em Pop-Pop's famous words, 'Quality pays. Buy a Martin.'" —**William Coyle, Maywood, NJ**

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# Fu Manchu

## No Shoes, No Shirt, No Fuzz



"We wanted to make a straight-ahead rock record," says Scott Hill (right, Bob Balch is left), "which meant few breaks, few effects, and a 40-minute-long album."

By Darrin Fox

**T**owards the end of our last tour, someone jumped on-stage and stole my Crown fuzz pedal," says Fu Manchu's Scott Hill. "I'd been using that pedal and my Fender Jaguar for over eight years. That was my sound. We did want to change our tones a little for the new record, but not that drastically! I thought to myself,

'Now, what do I do?'"

What Hill and co-guitarist Bob Balch did was redefine the mighty Fu Manchu sound, which, over the course of six albums, has relied heavily on larger-than-life, fuzzed-out guitars. On the group's seventh release, *California Crossing* [Mammoth], Fu Manchu's heavy riffs and badass solos remain, but the guitar tones are leaner and

meaner. Hill credits not only the bold swiping of his fave fuzz for Fu's tonal transformation, but a change of guitars, as well.

"I've always dug those clear Dan Armstrong guitars," he says. "One night some guys from [Armstrong distributor] Ampeg showed up and we were able to try them out. Once I got rid of the wood bridge and put a Seymour Duncan Hot Rails in

there, I plugged straight into my Marshall TSL 2000 head, and everyone in the band said, 'What's *that* sound?' Then Bob tried it, and he's been using Gibson SGs through Fuzz Faces for years. Now we both play Dan Armstrongs, and neither of us uses a fuzz pedal—we plug right into our amps."

Another tonal change on *California Crossing* was a more





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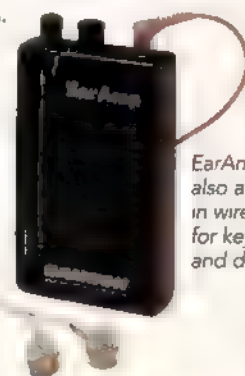
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## Fu Manchu

layered guitar sound. "The old tones had so much fuzz and low end, we couldn't stack guitars without the mix getting real muddy," explains Hill. "But our new setup produces tones that make stacking easy."

"Sometimes there are six guitars on a track," adds Balch, who handled all the solos on the album. "We just get them tight enough so you can't really tell. We layer tones not to make a track sound like it has more guitars, but rather to tailor the sound. For example, if a part needs to be more percussive, we'll layer a cleaner, edgier tone on top of the distorted sounds."

On tunes such as the title track, "Thinkin' Out Loud," and "Ampn," Fu Manchu actually *sweetens* their sound with tighter song structures, backup vocals, and an emphasis on hooks.

"When we started writing for this record, we knew we wanted catchier choruses," says Hill. "Our producer, Matt Hyde, helped a lot—not only by coming up with ideas, but also by pushing us to come up with ideas. And we really worked hard on arrangements. We recorded 20 songs on a demo, gave them to Matt, and he told us he had some ideas if we were willing to try them. We said, 'Hell yeah, that's why we want you to produce the record.' We ended up changing almost every song from its original state."

**"We wanted to screw with the tonal formula a little on *California Crossing*," says Scott Hill, "but we've stayed true to the Fu Manchu sound."**

"Matt really kicked our ass," adds Balch. "And we did a lot of preproduction—which was refreshing. I listen to our older records and wonder, 'Why did I do that there?' This time, I had a chance to listen and figure out little hooks and construct my solos more. That's why I feel *California Crossing* is the most honest representation of me as a guitarist."

Although Fu Manchu has built a steady following over the past eight years by touring incessantly and delivering a blistering live show, the group loves recording and hopes to go back in the studio soon. "We have a bunch of tunes we didn't record for this album," says Hill, "and I'm ready to go in and start laying those down *right now*. I really dig getting together with the guys and piecing riffs together."

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# Zoot Horn Rollo

## Beyond Beefheart



"I really have to care about the melody when I play slide," says Rollo. "It's like opera—which is all about caring about melody. Seriously—try playing an opera aria with a slide!"

By Joe Gore

**I**'ve always liked putting wrong things together," says guitarist Bill Harkleroad. That sentiment won't surprise fans of his groundbreaking mutant-blues guitar work with Captain Beefheart and the Magic Band in the late '60s and early '70s. But some of Harkleroad's new music might. Harkleroad has reappropri-

ated his Captain Beefheart-era moniker, Zoot Horn Rollo, for his first solo album, *We Saw a Bozo Under the Sea* [Burnside: [zoothornrollo.com](http://zoothornrollo.com)]*—*a work that answers some of the questions posed by Beefheart fans since Rollo debuted on the Magic Band's 1969 masterpiece, *Trout Mask Replica*. Yes, Rollo is a technically skilled player who can

play inside as well as out. Yes, he's an inspired improviser—even though Beefheart's random-sounding music actually featured little improvisation. And yes, the jazz influences cited by Magic Band members in interviews are more than lip service.

"Beefheart fans will recognize my sound on the new record," he says, "though they may be sur-

prised by the jazzier direction. Some people have used the 'fusion' word to describe the music, but, to me, all those angular, bluesman-gone-crazy melodies are more influenced by things like Thelonious Monk's piano playing and Bela Bartók's string quartets. I've tried to develop a more chromatic mentality and get away from some of my old



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## Zoot Horn Rollo

R&B influences."

One constant between old Rollo and new Rollo is the 51-year-old guitarist's unorthodox slide style—he's fond of inserting slide-generated notes into fingered passages, and he doesn't raise his guitar action for slide work or use open tunings.

"For me, playing slide is more about a light touch and lots of volume," he says. "And everybody thinks you need to use open tunings so you can get more than one note at a time, but I don't see it that way. I envision slide playing like singing, and you only sing one note at a time. Think of opera—the vibrato and tone are very much like slide guitar." Rollo wears his slide on his pinkie, and he has used the same one for 30 years: an  $11/16$ " sparkplug wrench given to him by the late Little Feat guitarist Lowell George.

Rollo's main guitar is the Fender Telecaster with DiMarzio pickups that he played on 1972's *Clear Spot*, his favorite Beefheart disc. (His *Trout Mask Tele* was stolen from a New York City cab in the '70s and never recovered.) Other Bozo guitars include a Gibson ES-175, a Hernandez classical, a Breedlove 6-string acoustic, and a Jerry Jones 6-string bass (strung as a baritone guitar in A).

**"I used to play everything in a hyperventilated way. Now, I've learned to pay attention to the full duration of each note."**

"The Jerry Jones is all over the record," notes Rollo. "The first time I plugged it in, I ran it through some stereo effect into two amps, and it was like floating on a pillow as big as a house. It opened up a bed that I could play over without getting in the way of the standard-tuned guitar. I use it for a lot of classical-style fingerpicking."

Rollo's sole effects are an Ibanez Tube Screamer and a touch of compression from an old DigiTech digital pedalboard, but he augments his palette with an early Roland synth

module controlled by a Fender Stratocaster with a hexaphonic pickup. "I usually mix a little bit of a buzzy synth sound with straight guitar to create bigger-than-life distortion," he explains. "Like on the intro solo of 'Got a Buzz On.'"

Another departure from the Beefheart days is his use of small amps. "Back then," remembers Rollo, "we used to think bigger equaled better. Now I wish I'd used little, funky Fenders—particularly because they're great for warming up the trebly, spiny way that I tend to play. For this record, I used a '54 Champ, a '64 Princeton, and a '54 Deluxe."

Interest in Beefheart's music has increased since the release of *Dust Blows Forward*, Rhino's superb two-disc Beefheart anthology. "I've gone back and relearned all those *Trout Mask* things, and it has been okay," says Rollo, who is entertaining the possibility of a Magic Band reunion (minus the reclusive Captain Beefheart, a.k.a. Don Van Vliet). "There was a cool angst to how I used to play everything in such a hyperventilated way. Since then, I've learned to pay attention to breath and the full duration of the note. That's partly a matter of being secure enough in my chops to not worry where the next note will come from. But it's also a matter of caring about note shape, and of learning to control the *shape* of a note as if it were a gelatinous object floating in the air."

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# Norman Stephens

## A Country-Swinger Comes Full Circle

By Art Thompson

**A**sk an old-school country fan to name their favorite guitar solos, and it's likely that the lead break on the old Lefty Frizzell hit "If You've Got the Money (I've Got the Time)" would be on the list. An astute fan would also know that it was Norman Stephens who fingered the jazzy lines on that song—as well as a string of other hits by the '50s-era country-swing superstar.

"I was only about 18 then, and that solo just kind of happened," says Stephens. "I didn't know anyone thought much of it until recently."

Stephens' playing had long ago caught the ear of Merle Haggard, and when Haggard found out the ex-Frizzell sideman lived nearby him in northern California, he immediately enlisted the 69-year-old guitarist for his latest album, *Roots, Vol. 1* (Anti/Epithaph). Stephens played the lion's share of the solos on the new CD, which is both a tribute to Frizzell and a celebration of the sweet, western-swing sound that Haggard grew up on.

Born and raised near Port Smith, Arkansas, Stephens honed his 6-string skills listening to guitarists such as Jimmy Wyble and Junior Barnard (who both backed country-swing legend Bob Wills). After graduating from high school, he hit the road. "I jobbed around the country, paying my dues, and eventually wound up out in Big Spring, Texas, where I



Perfect strangers: Norman Stephens (left) and Merle Haggard.

met Lefty Frizzell," Stephens says. "That was before anyone had heard of him, and Lefty and I got to be real good friends."

Stephens and Frizzell eventually headed for different parts of the country, but when Stephens wound up back in Big Spring, Frizzell was poised to give him his big break. "I was playing a club when Lefty called me from Dallas saying he had this recording contract," recalls Stephens. "He wanted to know if I'd come down and cut some records with him—which I did in July of 1950. We had no idea he was going be

an overnight success, but after the records hit, he organized a little road band to start touring. That's what I did until the spring of 1951, when I got drafted during the Korean War. It was the end of the world for me at the time, because we really had a hot little band. I loved touring with Lefty."

Two years later, Stephens was back looking for a guitar job. Frizzell was traveling solo then, so Stephens was recommended to honky-tonk/country-swing star Hank Thompson by high-school friend and steel player Bobby White. "I passed the au-

dition and wound up traveling with Hank until February, 1954, when I finally got tired of living out of a suitcase," Stephens recounts. "Then I drifted out to California, got into civil engineering, and spent the next 36 years doing that. Of course, I kept a hand in music by playing local clubs on weekends for some years. But Redding is about the worst town in this country for live music, and when it finally fizzled out, I more or less quit playing."

At the urging of his wife, Stephens decided to give music another shot. "I called a few guys



## Norman Stephens

I thought might be into starting a little band, and one of them mentioned my name to Merle's piano player," he says. "I guess Merle was kind of blown away that I lived so close to him. I knew he lived in the area, of course, but I had never wanted to bug him or anything. He called me and said he'd been thinking about doing a tribute to Lefty Frizzell, and within a few days we were recording the music for *Roots*. Sometime later, Merle asked me to join his band, and I've been traveling with him ever since."

Stephens describes the sessions—which were done in Haggard's living room—as being similar to the ones Frizzell conducted 50 years ago. "Back


then, tape recording was relatively new and everybody just played together," he says. "If mistakes were made, you did the entire song all over again. That's how it was done at Jim Beck's studio in Dallas [where Frizzell recorded his early hits], and that's how Merle recorded this album. I think we pretty much got that old sound."

Another major factor behind the vintage sound on *Roots* is the melodic ensemble work by Stephens and steel-player Norm Hamlet. "I think you can credit the Bob Wills group for the genesis of that twin-guitar style—particularly when Jimmy Wyble and Cameron Hill were in the band," says Stephens. "We played that harmony style on most of Lefty's records, and Hank Thompson also had some good twin-guitar

arrangements. I felt like a kid again playing that way on this album, and the audiences seem very receptive to hearing us do it live."



Like many guitarists of his generation, Stephens started out playing hollowbody instruments. "On the Frizzell records, I played a blond National with one pickup," he says. "Then I got a little Gibson ES-150. I started playing a Fender Telecaster when I joined Hank Thompson, and I stuck with that guitar for the rest of my career. It had such a wide range of sounds—from bassy to high treble—and the action was really neat. A lot of guys started using Teles because they were so comfortable to play, and you could sure bang them around without hurting them. I backed over mine with a car once and didn't even break a string." Stephens is currently playing a Merle Haggard Signature Telecaster given to him by Haggard, and he plugs into a reissue Fender Bassman.

Asked how working with Haggard compares to backing Frizzell, Stephens replies: "Lefty used to just let us play whatever came to mind, and that's kind of how Merle operates now. He told me he wanted to get away from the more aggressive style of country music—kind of sweeten it up a little—and that's where my old gutbucket blues style fits in. We're trying to revive a musical genre, and hopefully we've accomplished that to some degree."



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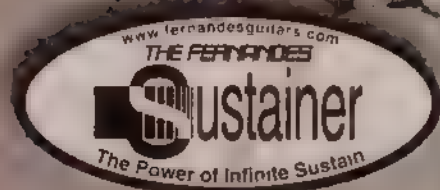


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# Bill Frisell

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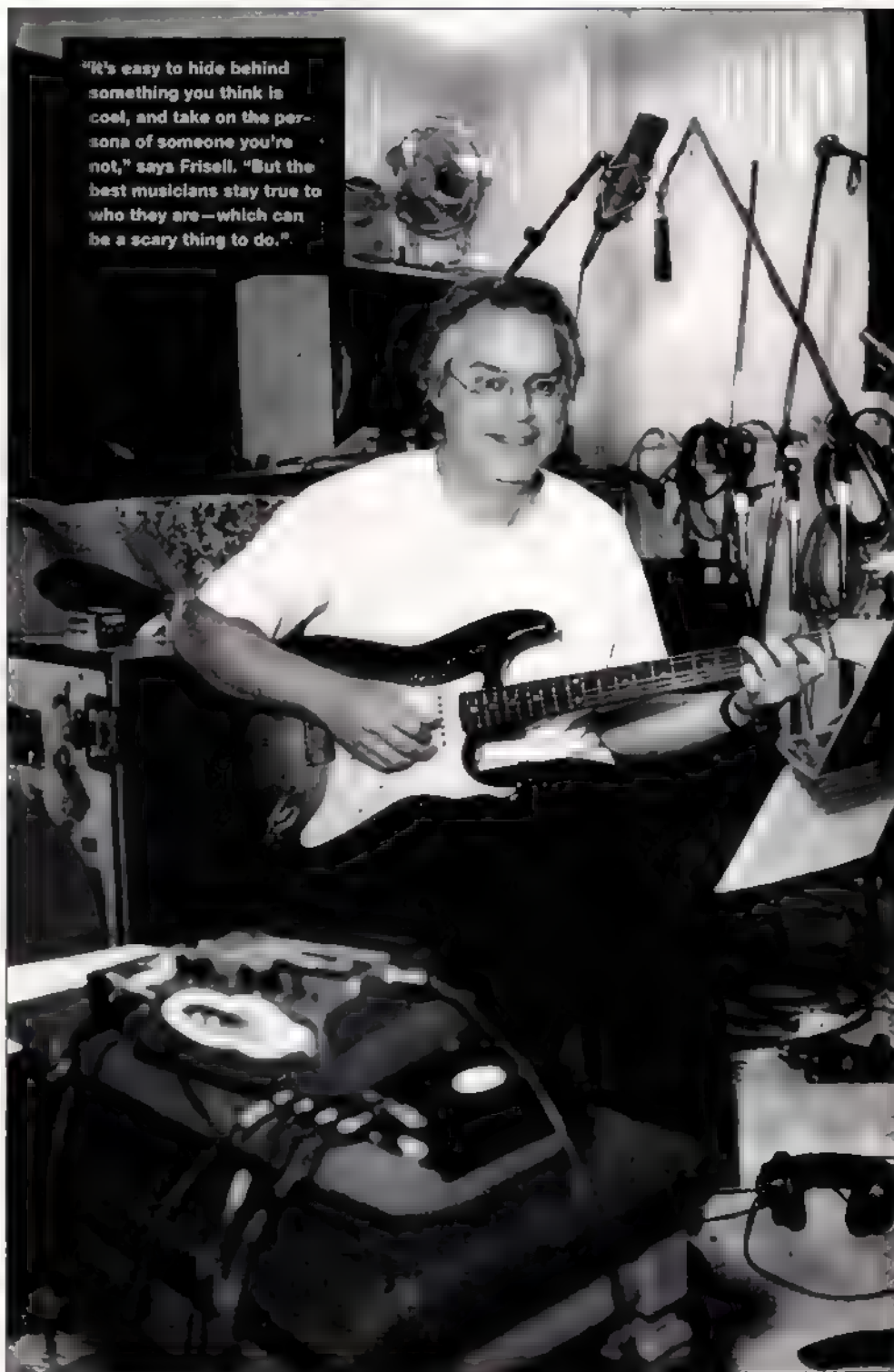
By Jude Gold

**S**tep into Bill Frisell's musical kitchen, and you'll see one of guitar's master chefs in action. His daring recipes call for tart melodies, angular harmonies, and mercurial background textures, and, best of all, when he cooks up a solo album, he often invites stellar guests to join him. His new release, *Bill Frisell with Dave Holland and Elvin Jones* [Nonesuch], is a case in point.

"I never dreamed I'd get to work with Elvin," says Frisell of John Coltrane's legendary drummer. "I didn't want to just do what Coltrane might have done with him—he probably gets asked to play that stuff all the time. Instead, I wanted to bring him into *my* world. We'd never played a note together, so I was pretty nervous about how he'd respond, but it seemed like he really got off on doing something different."

Frisell, who relocated from New York to Seattle in 1989, doesn't need a guitar in his hands to begin work on new material. "A lot of my tunes come from writing stream-of-consciousness melodies on a piece of music paper, as if I was just walking down the street whistling to myself," he

"It's easy to hide behind something you think is cool, and take on the persona of someone you're not," says Frisell. "But the best musicians stay true to who they are—which can be a scary thing to do."







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## Bill Frisell

says. "However weird a melody may sound, I'm actually *hearing* it—not generating it from some intellectual process. If you can hear a major scale in your head, you can quickly begin to hear all the chromatic, dissonant notes in between."

Drawing from a wild harmonic imagination—and the big-band arranging courses he took at Berklee College of Music—Frisell's next step is adding layers. "This record is live and spontaneous, yet there are a lot of overdubs and guitar orchestrations," he says. "I was only in there for a few hours with Dave and Elvin, but then I went back and added harmonies and doubled melodies. I even doubled some of Dave's acoustic bass parts, playing them an octave lower on electric bass."

Otherworldly timbres are a huge part of the Frisell experience. "There's always some backwards stuff going on somewhere," he says. "I create loops with my Line 6 DL4 Delay Modeler and DigiTech eight-second delay. I'm constantly going through the machines, so if I play something that I think might be cool to trap in there, I can do it on the fly. And I still get weird sounds from my old Electro-Harmonix 16-second delay—crazy sounds you can never get twice. That thing goes out of control really easily and sounds like it's about to *explode*. I also use a Lexicon MPX 100 program that combines a delay with a harmonizer. First, you hear the dry sound of your guitar. Then, all these little tinkly notes come out an octave higher."

One of Frisell's most striking special effects involves no electronics whatsoever. "I unconsciously bend the neck around when I'm playing," he says. "It's kind of like manual chorusing. It evolved from playing a chord, hearing one note sound out of tune, and then pushing the neck a little bit to get it in tune. Then, of course, all the other notes go *out* of tune, so it's a constant struggle. It worked best on my old Gibson SG, which used to be my main guitar. Its neck doesn't join the body until the 22nd fret, so the neck is like a rubber band."

Frisell's current guitar is a new Gibson ES-446, on which he replaced the pots, the tailpiece, the tuners, the saddles, and the nut, redid the frets, and put in Seymour Duncan Antiquity pickups. For the album sessions, Frisell also used an Andersen archtop, a jumbo Klein acoustic, and a weathered Gibson J-45 borrowed from producer Lee Townsend.

"I like amps to be clean, but not too powerful—that way you can push them a little bit," he says about his preference for small amps. "My favorites are Gibsons and Fenders from the '50s, but they're hard to find in good working order. I have a couple of Mesa/Boogie amps that come close to that type of sound—a Subway Blues that has just one 10" speaker, and a Blue Angel 2x10. When I'm traveling, I usually ask for Fender '65

**"Ry Cooder once said—and it really rang true to me—that you should go into every musical situation like you're a student."**

Deluxe Reverb reissues, which are great."

Frisell drives his amps with an Ibanez Tube Screamer. "That pedal is so popular because

it really *feels* like it's part of the amp when it kicks in—the notes come out smooth and not too grainy."

Whether he's working on a new album or performing live, Frisell thrives when interacting with other players. "That's how I learn and progress—by playing with different people and absorbing something from them," he offers. "You don't want to go into a situation just to show off what you already know. Instead, get into a headspace where you're completely open to what the other person has to offer. If everybody in the band is doing that, this *energy* happens. It's still important to practice on your own, of course, but you learn the most when you're in the same room with other musicians." ■



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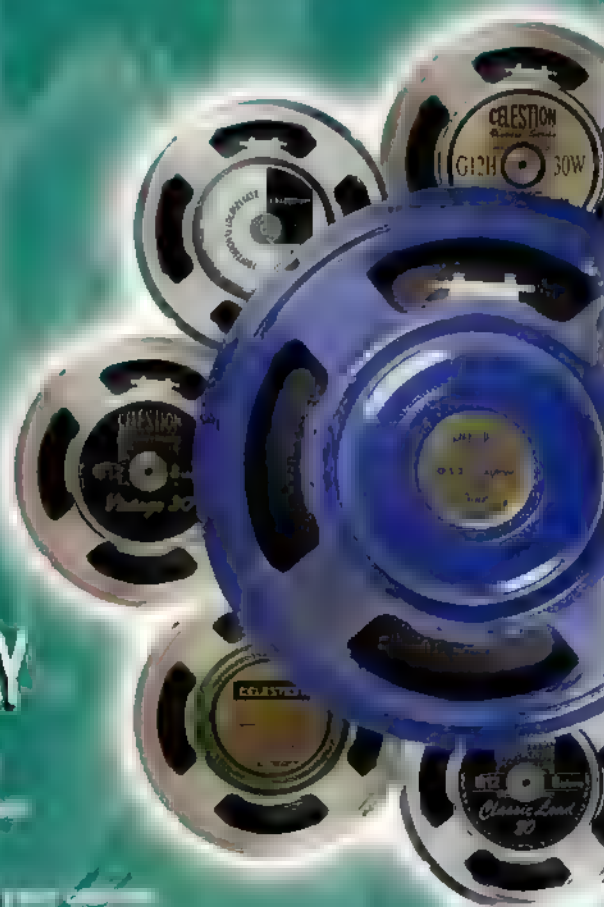
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# Pickups

## The Paladins

**F**ueled by the stripped-down, revved-up guitar of Dave Gonzales, the Paladins wheeled their vintage-sounding machine onto the national stage nearly two decades ago. And while scores of bands have ridden rockabilly's occasional waves since then, the Pals have remained a fixture on the

scene. Their latest effort, *Palvoline No. 7* (Ruf Records), may offer the clearest hint to the trio's staying power—instead of limiting themselves to the genre's most obvious elements, the members embrace a host of seminal influences.

"Back in the '40s, '50s, and '60s, all kinds of styles blended



"I love Indian music," says Shawn Lane. "I'm excited by its discipline, its rhythms, and the level of musicianship the players bring to it."



"To me, the Beatles are roots musicians," says the Paladins' Dave Gonzales. "Their stuff is real. You can't say that about a lot of music today."

with each other," says Gonzales. "In blues, you had country. In rock, you had blues. In country, those cats were *rockin'*. And if you check out just one person, he'll lead you to other places. My grandma bought me my first record—Chuck Berry's 'Johnny B. Goode'—and, before I knew it, I was checking out *his* influences. I found Muddy Waters, Wes Montgomery, and even guys like Joe Maphis and Grady Martin."

Given his penchant for the old school, Gonzales' rig is no surprise. He cut most of *Palvoline No. 7* with his trusty '57 Guild X-550 archtop. "It's all glued and taped together, but it's like an extension of me," he says. "I use a reissue Fender Bassman on the road, but the only amp I used to record the album was an ancient Magnatone with a single 8" speaker. Some-

times we didn't even mic it. The amp was close enough to the piano that the sound got picked up by the piano mics, and it sounded great just like that. I really don't like the gear thing to get too complicated. I think the focus should be what you're playing, not what you're playing *with*." —RUSTY RUSSELL

## Shawn Lane

**T**he stories surrounding Shawn Lane's fretboard prowess are legion. Early in his career, he mesmerized Billy Gibbons so much that Gibbons actually fell off his chair. He embarrassed Ted Nugent in an onstage riff duel, and performed with southern-rock barnburners Black Oak Arkansas when he was only 14 years old. Back then, Lane simply outplayed



## Pickups

easy categorization—he could boogie like Steve Morse, play legato lines like Allan Holdsworth, and alternate pick like Al Di Meola.

"I didn't want to be pigeonholed, so I played like all the people I admired," says the 38-year-old Memphis native.

If his latest album, *Good People in Times of Evil* [Bardo], is any indication, being pigeonholed remains the least of Lane's worries. Over the past few years, he and longtime musical partner, bassist Jonas Hellborg, have immersed themselves deeply in South Indian Carnatic music. On the album, you can hear Lane's absorptive powers at work, as he un-

cannily emulates the sounds of indigenous Indian stringed instruments using orthodox guitar techniques such as bends, slides, hammer-ons, and pull-offs.

"My choice of guitar is a big reason I can mimic Indian phrases," says Lane. "I play a Vigier Excalibur, which has a very flat fretboard, and a Gibson-style scale length—24 3/4"—that allows me to bend easier and more fluidly. I also employ a little neck bending—something I learned from watching Bill Frisell."

Lane also credits his Lace TransSensor pickups and DR Handmade Strings as crucial components of his sound. "The pickups are high output, and they're very even across the frequency spectrum," he says. "And I've been using

DR Handmade Strings for years. I use a set of pure nickel .008s. They play like .007s, and sound like .010s."

Lane plugs his Vigier into a Peavey TransTube FEX preamp, and then direct into the board. "I have arthritis, so it's difficult for me to carry anything," explains Lane of his reason for eschewing amps. "I had Peavey's James Brown emulate the EQ curve of an old Holmes amp I had that sounded really smooth, and then program the sound into the FEX. Plus, I'm playing with more of a clean tone these days, so the direct sound really works." Lane's only effect is a Line 6 DL4 Delay Modeler.

"To me, playing music isn't about entertainment, or even art," Lane observes. "It's about the mental state you're in while playing. It's like a type of meditation or prayer."

—JON CHAPPELL ■

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To hear an example of Shawn Lane's Indian-style articulation, go to [musicplayer.com/guitarplayer](http://musicplayer.com/guitarplayer) and check out the excerpt from "Uma Haimavati."

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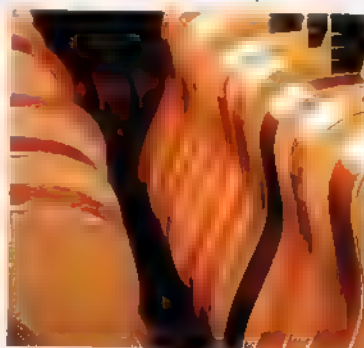
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# Buzz

## The Distillers

**A**ll of my favorite guitarists have very identifiable styles," says Brody, guitarist/singer for L.A. punkers the Distillers. "Guys like Johnny Ramone, Steve Jones, and Greg Ginn—their styles are extremely personal, and they define the 'I don't care' attitude of punk rock. They just play the hell out of the guitar because they love playing guitar."

On their second record, *Sing Sing Death House* (Epitaph), Australian native Brody and co-guitarist Rose Casper unleash shards of power-chord riffing that smear the lines between early Clash, Circle Jerks, and even Motorhead. But for Brody, bringing something new and different to punk rock is not a priority. "You'd

have to be really conceited to think you're going to advance punk rock," says Brody. "Nobody sits down and decides to start a revolution. It's born out of disillusioned and disenfranchised kids."

To record *Sing Sing*, Brody—who says she'll "pretty much use anything"—relied on a Fender Strat (strung with Ernie Ball .011s) loaded with a Seymour Duncan humbucker. Her main amp for the sessions was a Mesa/Boogie Dual Rectifier and a Boogie 4x12 cabinet.

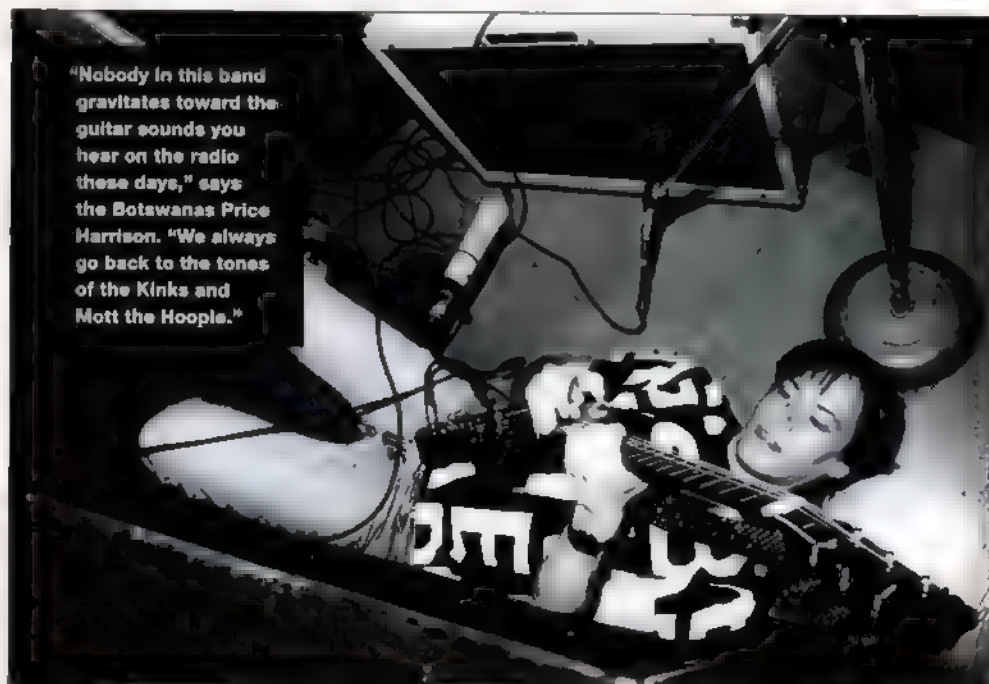
With Brody's "plug in and go" ethos, her cavalier attitude toward recording is not surprising. "We didn't really have a producer," she says. "If you're making a pop record, I can see how

a producer could help. But what is a producer going to do in a

punk session? All we need are Spinal Tap guitars, drums, and bass. That's it." —DARRIN FOX



"Punk rock guitar isn't a technical thing," says the Distillers' Brody. "You don't need a good guitar. All you need is an amp that you can turn up loud."



"Nobody in this band gravitates toward the guitar sounds you hear on the radio these days," says the Botswanas' Price Harrison. "We always go back to the tones of the Kinks and Mott the Hoople."

## The Botswanas

**"W**e're definitely a riff-oriented band," says the Botswanas' Price Harrison. "We've written songs where we're singing over chord progressions, but those are the tunes we end up *not* keeping."

On the group's *Fade and You're Gone* (Feralette), Harrison comes across as a modern-day Dave Davies with tough tones and an ear for the almighty riff. "We're not a throwback group," he explains. "I just dig the tones from the '60s and '70s, and I think about those sounds when I write songs."

Harrison credits his tandem amp setup of a Peavey Classic 50



## Buzz

and an '85 Fender Super Champ for the album's tactile, punchy tones. But he also identifies another important ingredient in the tonal stew. "Recording to tape is best for rock music," he says. "Tape captures the nuances of guitars and drums much better than digital media. To my ears, it also adds more space and depth to the overall sound of the recording."

Harrison's main guitar for the sessions was his Les Paul Jr., along with a Gibson All American and a Les Paul DC. "I also used an Epiphone Firebird," he says. "Its mini-humbuckers have more of an airy sound and less

crunch than regular humbuckers, which makes that guitar perfect for electric strumming parts." All of Harrison's guitars are strung with Fender .009s.

In addition to sharing production credit with lead singer Eileen Zientz, Harrison also handled the bulk of the album's mixes. "I wanted to have a hand in mixing this record because I'm amazed at how few albums have loud guitars these days," he explains. "Our engineer, Chris Milford, helped me mix, and he actually wanted the guitars louder than I did. I'd say, 'Chris, you've got to hear some of the vocals.' His response was just, 'Let's rock.' You don't run into that mindset very often—especially in Nashville,

where we mixed the record. The vocals are so loud on most Nashville recordings that you can't even hear the guitars. Maybe we can change that."

—DARRIN FOX

## Surface of Eceon

**P**lenty of guitarists tout the virtues of improvisation, swearing they never play the same solo twice. But you know somebody is serious about shooting from the hip when they never play a song the same way twice. Such is the way of ambient rockers Surface of Eceon.

Featuring three guitarists, the Connecticut-based quintet amassed the six epic tunes for its dreamy debut, *The King Beneath the Mountain* [Strange Attractors], from hours of droning, free-form jams that had just one stipulation—staying in the same key.

"During the first half hour of improvising, you're just getting used to each other, and things might not sound so great," explains Adam Forkner. "But once you're all melding mentally, it gets really interesting."

"When we've exhausted every place that we can go in the song," chimes in Aaron Snow, "we know the song is over."

To create their spacey textures, Eceon's three guitarist use no less than 12 delay



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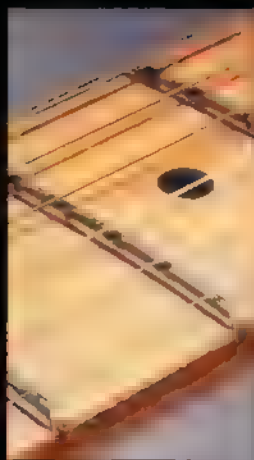


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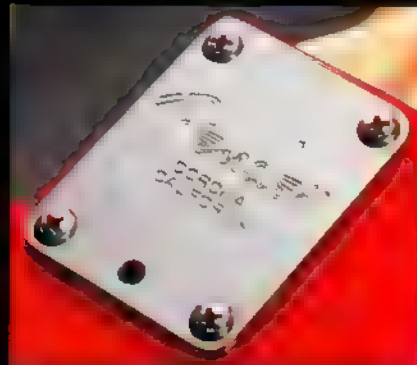
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## Buzz

pedals between them. "People say our pedals clicking on and off during a show sounds like crickets," says Forkner, who also uses Electra guitars, an Electro-Harmonix Big Muff, a Korg Mr. Multi wah/phaser/envelope filter, Moogerfooger MF-102 ring modulator and MF-101 low-pass filter pedals, a Boomerang looper, and a Heet Sound EBow. His amp is a Fender Hot Rod Deluxe.

Snow's gear consists of a '74 Fender Mustang, Electro-Harmonix Big Muff and Small Stone pedals, a Vox wah, and a '73 Fender Princeton Reverb. Third guitarist Dick Baldwin uses an

EBow, a Danelectro 59-DC Pro, a Gibson Les Paul Standard, a Vox wah, and a Big Muff through a '70s Fender Quad Reverb.

The three guitarists' love of ambient improvisational textures grew out of their boredom with structured genres. "Conventional music just doesn't have that magical feeling about it," Baldwin explains. "Ambient rock is a sonic attack on your senses that draws you in—although it's a slower process than when a straightforward rock band hits you with a hook right away. Ambient music lulls you—it might even put you to sleep—but, in the end, you have a more spiritual connection with the music."

—SHAWN HAMMOND



"Without any song structures, some people think we'd eventually stagnate," says Surface of Eceon's Adam Forkner. "But our jams will always be different because our individual headspaces will always be different."

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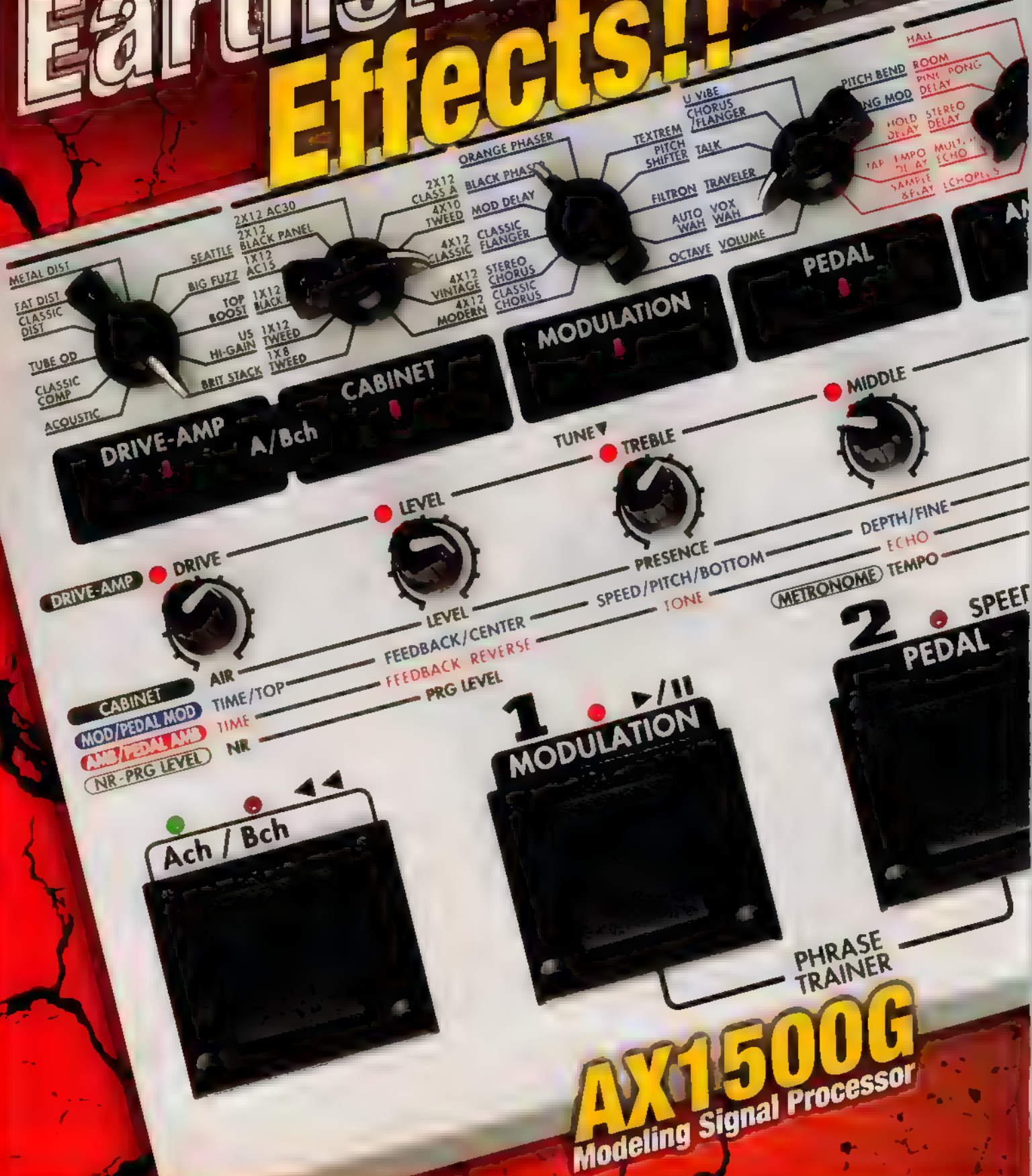
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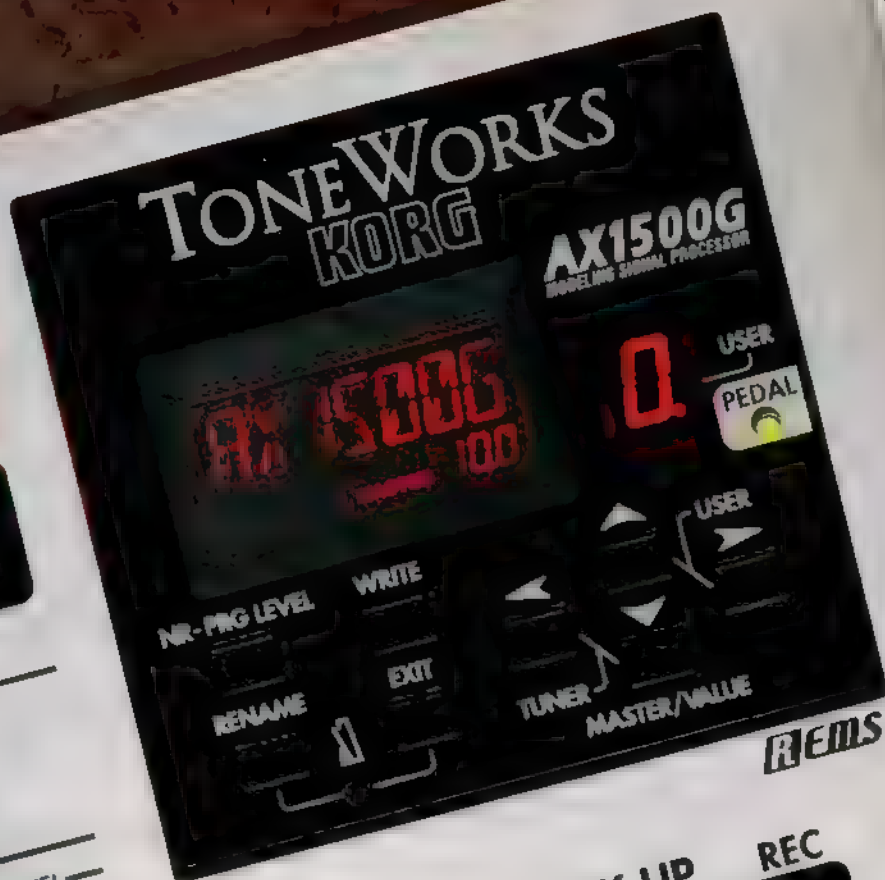


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# CALIFORNIA DIVERSITY



By Michael Molenda

**O**ne of California's oldest guitar companies probably isn't the first name you'd shout if "50-Year-Old Guitar Manufacturers" was a *Family Feud* category. But Carvin has been churning out stringed goodies since 1946, when founder Lowell Kiesel started selling his steel guitar and amp sets through classified ads in magazines such as *Popular Mechanics*. The idea to

market gear direct to customers—rather than through retail outlets—was initially a survival tactic. A distributor didn't pay Kiesel for an order of 100 units, and he had to find another means of doing business. From those simple classifieds, Kiesel Electronics—renamed Carvin (in honor of Kiesel's two eldest sons, Carson and Gavin) in 1949—grew into a diversified mammoth that today manufactures amplifiers, mixers, sound

systems, and monitor speakers, as well as made-to-order guitars and basses.

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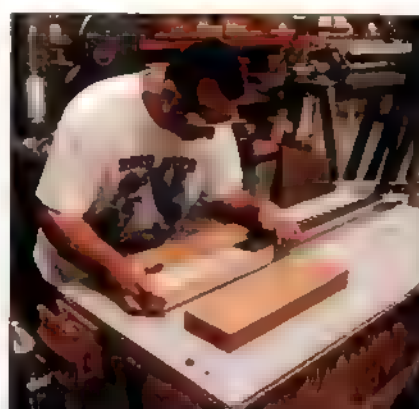
Kiesel Electronics sprang up in Los Angeles, and moved to Covina, California, in



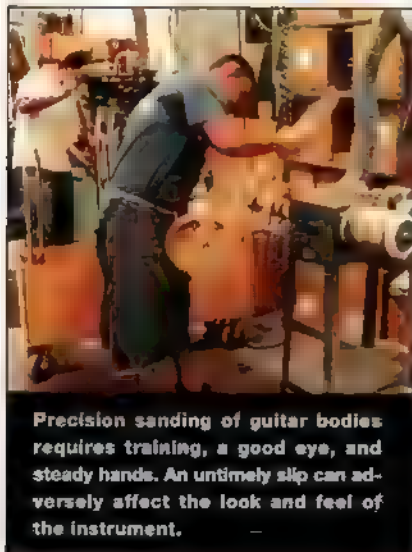
The guitar and bass factory's inventory of tone woods awaits orders. "We've developed a reputation for beautiful, exotic woods," says Carvin's Dave Flores. Note the stack of ebony wood at top left.



Here, one of the factory's CNC routing machines cuts out a guitar's pickup cavities. Carvin has developed more than 300 software programs for the machines to accommodate the company's many basic body shapes and pickup and chamber routings.



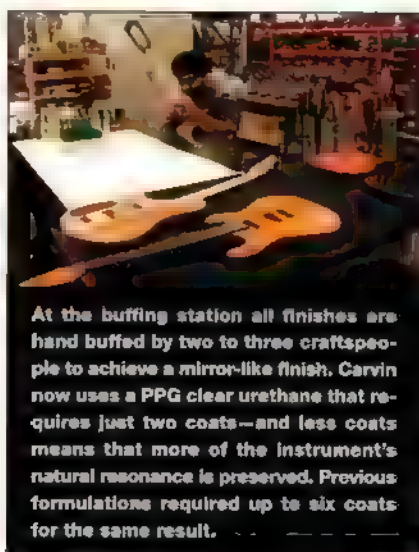
For models with matched sides, the edges of the two body pieces must be painstakingly sanded to ensure a tight, ziplocked fit with the neck assembly.



Precision sanding of guitar bodies requires training, a good eye, and steady hands. An untimely slip can adversely affect the look and feel of the instrument.



After the frets are cut and laid into the fret slots, the fingerboard is placed into a fret press, where 30 tons of pressure seats the frets evenly and all at once.



At the buffing station all finishes are hand buffed by two to three craftspeople to achieve a mirror-like finish. Carvin now uses a PPG clear urethane that requires just two coats—and less coats means that more of the instrument's natural resonance is preserved. Previous formulations required up to six coats for the same result.



1949. That was a big year for the company, as it not only marked a relocation and a name change, but also production of the first Carvin catalog—a publication that has become a fixture in many musicians' mailboxes ever since. Carvin's first solidbody electric rolled down the assembly line in 1954, and in 1968 the factory moved to Valley Center, San Diego. That was a brief move, however, as the area showered 40 inches of rain on the facility in a single year—not the best weather conditions for curing woods—and the factory relocated to Escondido in 1969. The present 80,000-square foot office and manufacturing base in San Diego (which also includes a retail store) was built from the ground up in 1995. The company is now run by the four Kiesel brothers, although their father still enjoys poking around the factory.

### THE DIVERSIFICATION FACTOR

The varied interests of the brothers ensured that Carvin's reach would extend beyond guitar manufacturing. Solid-state amps appeared in the '70s, followed by hybrids (tube front ends with solid-state power stages) in the '80s. The company's output also grew to



include outboard gear (equalizers, effects processors, etc.), wireless systems, speaker cabinets (guitar, bass, and sound reinforcement), studio reference monitors, mixers (powered and unpowered), power amps, and, most recently, the Cobalt Series of acoustic guitars (which are manufactured overseas, but set up with Tusq saddles, ebony bridge pins, and Elixir strings at the Carvin factory).

### THE CUSTOM SHOP

The custom-order concept was refined in the '90s, and now Carvin offers enough hardware, wood, and finish options to make a guitar 10,000 different ways. (The Virtual Custom Shop at [carvin.com](http://carvin.com) lets users see many of the possibilities.) In fact, the feedback gained from customer orders often drives new product development. Likewise, the company's artist models—which include Steve Vai's Legacy tube amps and Allan Holdsworth's H2 and HF2 Fatboy guitars—are directly informed by the player's design ideas. (Even with Holdsworth's guitars, however, the end user can still customize the original design to his or her liking.) The design and manufacturing arms of the com-



Quite a large family—a rack of diversely styled guitars awaits final testing.

pany are set up to ensure a product can be taken from concept to marketplace within a matter of months.

"I think what defines Carvin is that we make products that reflect the needs of pro musicians—with an ear to their comments and suggestions—at good price points," says Public Relations Director Dave Flores. "And today, musicians are taking more and more notice of what we're doing."

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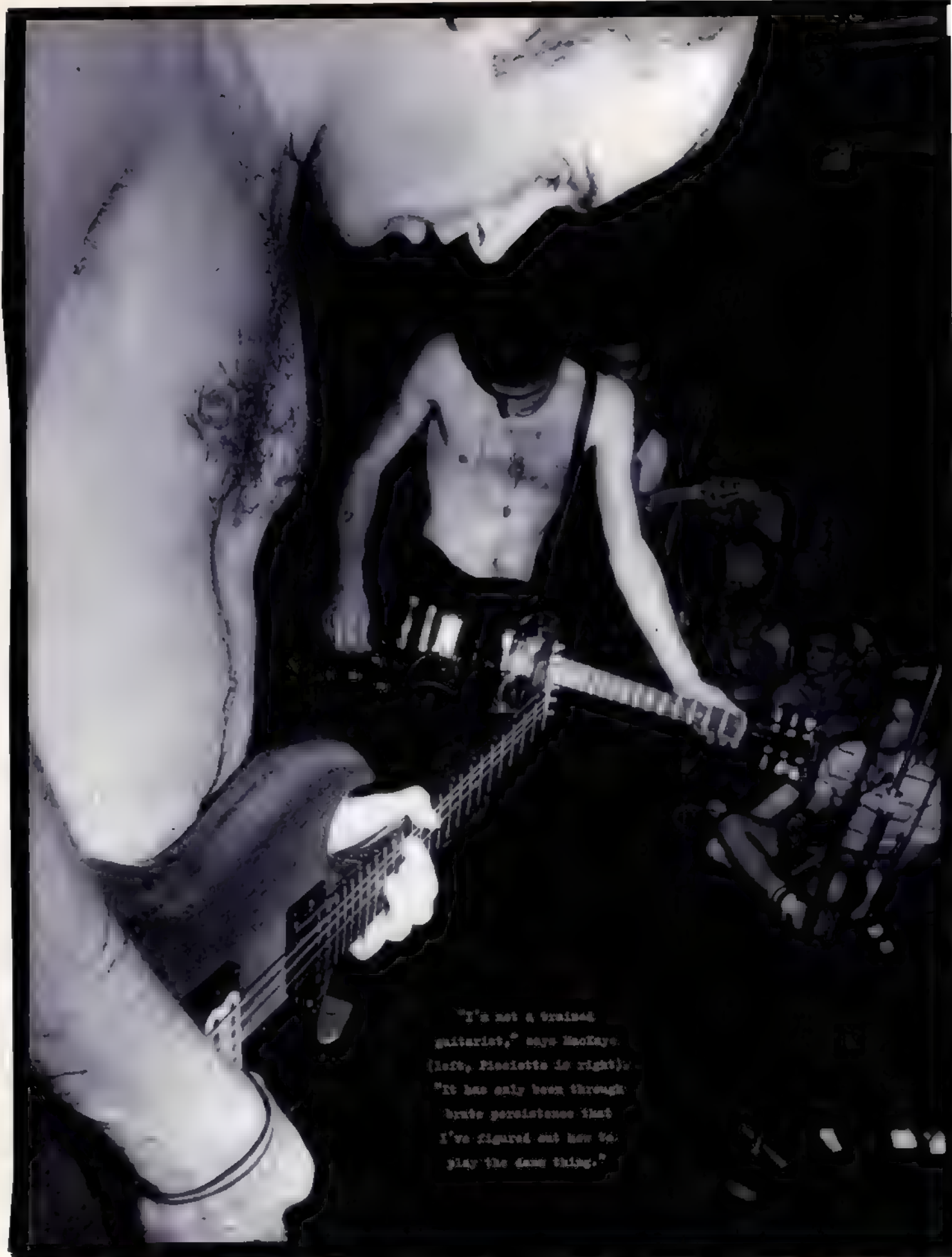
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"I'm not a trained guitarist," says MacLaine. (Left, Pisciotta is right). "It has only been through brute persistence that I've figured out how to play the damn thing."



# HARDCORE ARCHITECTS

S.P.E. in the U.S.

## FUGAZI'S

Ian MacKaye and Guy Picciotto

on Constructing

### *The Argument*

**F**ew punk bands can claim a legacy as enduring as Fugazi. Since their inception in 1987, the Washington, D.C.-based group has influenced a veritable who's who of modern rock acts that includes Pearl Jam, Nirvana, R.E.M., and Rage Against the Machine. ■ Fugazi's

music transcends punk rock, due, in large part, to guitarists Ian MacKaye and Guy Picciotto. Not limited to agitation and speed, the duo consistently explores textures and tones that range from sinister and strange to lush and atmospheric. ►

By

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# HARDCORE ARCHITECTS

The band's ninth full-length studio album, *The Argument* (Dischord), shows Fugazi is still evolving, while also maintaining their trademark angular songwriting, lockstep rhythms, and ferocious guitar work.

Perhaps the only thing more influential than Fugazi's music is the group's underground ethics. They only play all-ages shows (with ticket prices set at \$5 or \$6), and often decline interview requests from major music publications. The group has also given the finger to major labels by distributing their music via Dischord, an independent label founded in 1980 by MacKaye. But for two individuals who loom so large over all that is the "underground rock scene," MacKaye and Picciotto are disarmingly humble and very much in love with the guitar.



*You both coax distinctive sounds and percussive qualities from the guitar.*

**MacKaye:** I've been listening to Jimi Hendrix for as long as I can remember, and I think that has contributed to my obsession with making really cool sounds. I would never suggest what I do compares to Hendrix in any way, but I feel that, as musicians, we're looking for the same thing—sounds that *cannot* be notated on sheet music.

**Picciotto:** My approach to guitar is this: You have a toggle switch, tone controls, and an input jack, so you might as well mess around and see what kind of sounds you can get with those things.

*Is there anything about the particular guitars you play that lends itself to experimentation?*

**Picciotto:** I use Rickenbacker 330s. Most of my favorite guitar players—Roger McGuinn, Pete Townshend, and the Beatles—all played Rickenbackers. There's a percussiveness and clarity to the sound that really appeals to me. Also, there's so much space between the bridge and tailpiece, it's almost a second instrument—it's like playing a shrieking harp or something.

*Have you tried anything besides a Rickenbacker?*

**Picciotto:** I can't *conceive* of playing anything other than a Rickenbacker. I used to go into guitar stores and grab whatever was cheapest. But the time I went into a store and picked up a Rickenbacker, I felt I had finally found the guitar



"I do most of my writing on an Aria acoustic that my folks bought me when I was 11," says Picciotto (right, MacKaye is left). "I live in an apartment, so I don't get to play through an amp that much."





that made the most sense for me. I always had guitars that sounded "congested," and playing a Rickenbacker was like taking a sinus tablet. It cuts through the mix like a scalpel.

**MacKaye:** I still use Gibson SGs. My reasons were less elaborate than Guy's. I just thought, "That's a cool-looking guitar. I'll get that one."

*Do you use any effects when playing live?*

**MacKaye:** At our first practice 14 years ago, I played an SG through a Marshall JCM 800—no pedals—and that's exactly what I used at our last gig. I've never deviated from that setup.

*You're able to get a lot out of such basic components.*

**MacKaye:** Someone once asked me, "Don't you ever feel limited with that setup?" I actually find the lack of options liberating, because my

challenge is clear: if I'm going to get something musical out of it, I've got to *work*. Plus, tonal options drive me crazy. They're distracting.

**Picciotto:** Live, I use either a Marshall JCM 800 or a '70s 100-watt Park head through a red Marshall 4x12 cab. I use a few effects on records—mostly my Budda wah pedal, an Oberheim Echoplex, and an MXR Distortion+ for added sustain. Onstage, it's just guitar and amp. I do, however, sometimes play my digital tuner through my amp.

*How does that work?*

**Picciotto:** The tuner emits a tone, but it doesn't cut off your guitar signal, so you get both sounds simultaneously. I can get guitar feedback and play the tuner at the same time. The combination of the two tones is so sinister sounding. It's mostly something I use live when we're improvising. Unfortunately, I can't remember the brand of the tuner, and I don't think they make them anymore.

*Speaking of strange sounds, what are the really high-pitched noises at the end of "Full Disclosure" on the new album?*

**Picciotto:** That's this bizarre instrument I bought at a thrift store. I originally thought it was a tenor guitar, but then I realized someone had just taken a banjo neck and rammed it into this really small, SG-type guitar body. I found a way to make it shriek by playing it past the frets.

*How do you work out your guitar parts?*

**MacKaye:** When we write and rehearse, we don't play loud so we can hear how the guitars are interacting.

*That's surprising because Fugazi has always been associated with volume and noise.*

**MacKaye:** The problem with volume is that, after a certain point, the human ear can't take it. When I was in my very first band, the Teen Idles, my grandmother came to see us, and, after the show, she said, "Oh, that was very fast and loud and exhilarating. But did you ever think about the fact that if you were to play slowly once in a while, the other parts would seem much faster? And if you played quietly once in a while, the other parts would seem much louder?" That was a cool insight that really stuck with me.

*Your guitar styles seem to have evolved so organically. What's your take on formal guitar lessons?*

**Picciotto:** I don't think lessons are necessarily bad, I just feel the best thing you can do to learn how to play is to form a band *immediately*. Don't wait until you think you're "good enough." Just go for it.

**MacKaye:** Ultimately, if you pick up a guitar and play it, then you're a "guitar player." A number of people in the world would say otherwise, but if we were limited to *their* definition of guitar playing, there'd be no evolution.

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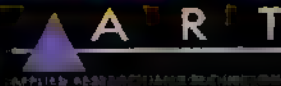
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# chordless comping



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"rhythm guitar," what  
leaps to mind? Crunchy  
power chords? Chimey  
open-string voicings? Per-  
haps you imagine Freddie  
Green's three-note swing  
grips, or Hendrix-inspired  
hammers and pulls that  
flow around partial-barre  
shapes like hot wax in a

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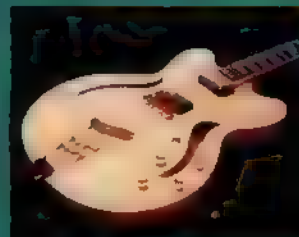
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# chordless comping

lava lamp. These sounds are all cool and essential, yet you can also play dynamite rhythm guitar without fretting a single chord. The secret lies in knowing how to use *intervals* to outline a progression.

In this lesson, we'll explore ways to sketch rich harmony in a variety of styles—funk, blues, country, and jazz—using only intervals. Once you've investigated these examples, you'll have a new way to play *and* hear music.

## PREFLIGHT CHECK

First, we need to distinguish between a chord and an interval. A chord contains three or more notes, and an interval comprises two notes. An interval measures the distance—or air gap, as George Van Eps used to say—between two tones. You can play an interval harmonically (both tones at the same time) or melodically (one tone follows the other). In the following examples, we're concerned with the *harmonic* in-

terval—two notes sounded simultaneously.

An interval can't pack the same punch as a bigger voicing—it's a matter of physics. By sacrificing power, however, you gain mobility. Think about it: A five- or six-note chord is clunky—you can't dart around the fretboard with these huge blocks of sound. By contrast, an interval is nimble. Instead of strumming a fixed chunk of tones for one or more measures, you can use intervals to poke and jab at the harmony to create a more adventurous groove.

In practice, you'll find that integrating intervals *and* chords offers the best of both worlds. But for now, let's play a game—just how much music can we make using only two notes at a time?

## GOT TO FUNKIFY

Our interval palette consists of 12 half-step possibilities. We use two of these in Ex. 1, which alternates between tart major seconds and sweet major sixths, to create a funky groove. Played as written, the riff sounds angular and tight. If you want a grittier vibe, add sixteenth-note string scrapes during some of the rests.

This riff drapes nicely over a D7, D9, or D13, and because it doesn't use open strings, you can transpose it to any key. The secret to moving any

riff lies in identifying its root (or, if the riff doesn't contain a root, visualizing its *assumed* root). In this case, the root (D) lies on the third string—it's the top note in the insistent major seconds.

As you shift positions, let your 3rd finger glide on the fourth string. *Feel* your way along the fretboard. To play great rhythm guitar, you need to take your eyes off the strings and watch your bandmates instead of your fingers. It's crucial to stay connected to the ebb and flow of the music around you, and you can't do that when you're absorbed with your own movements.

We stay in the same pocket for Ex. 2—a sassy call-and-response riff. It contains a major third, two different tritones, a minor sixth, and a fifth.

The nagging tritones are at the heart of this one-bar groove. Beat one contains C-F#, our first tritone. The last interval in beat three is the second tritone, F#-C. Notice that it's simply an inversion of the first tritone. (To invert an interval, drop the top note an octave, or, conversely, raise the bottom note an octave.) A tritone is the only interval that remains the same when inverted. All other intervals morph into something else. For example, a fourth becomes a fifth, a sixth becomes a third, a second becomes a seventh, and an octave becomes a unison.

The next time you are jamming over a

### Ex. 1

♩ = 76-88

Snappy

D7 (D9, D13)



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dominant-7th or dominant-9th chord, try our greasy Ex. 3. Here, it's notated as a D7 move, but you'll have no trouble sliding this figure into other keys. It begins with Ex. 1's rhythm grafted to one of Ex. 2's tritones, and ends with a pair of major thirds. The quarter bend in beat four adds a bluesy touch. That last D is optional.

Ex. 4 mixes tritones and major seconds into a sparse, yet stinky, groove. With its half-note rest, this lick illustrates the power of silence in rhythm work. It contains all the required tones to send the dominant-7th message—root (A), b7 (G), and 3 (C#)—yet you're only fingering two shapes. The sliding tritones in beat three imply a gospel-inspired IV7-I7 shift. These notes provide harmonic momentum, balancing the sta-

tic major seconds. This figure moves well along the fretboard, and, because it doesn't crowd the airwaves, it's handy for jams.

## HONKY TONK HEAVEN

While we're on the subject of jamming, let's tackle the classic Don Rich comping pattern in Ex. 5. This is the single most important groove in honky tonk. It's like a secret handshake—you need to know this twangy riff to step through the clubhouse door.

I've watched great hot-rod Tele pickers—such as Albert Lee, Ray Flacke, and Johnny Hiland—play this lick, and they all barely move their fretting-hand fingers. The key is to roll back and forth between the partial barres played by your 3rd and 1st digits. For authentic snap, you *must* use a hybrid pick-and-fingers grip as notated. Pull the second and third strings up as you pluck them. You'll know you're doing it right when the thirds start to pop.

As shown here, it's a C7 lick. By all means, ID

the third-string root and then start roaming the fretboard. Honky tonk pickers typically use this pattern to comp a I-IV-V progression. Shift positions during the rest (bar 2, beat four).

## BLUES GROOVES

The next two patterns come from the soul-blues family. As in the previous riff, Ex. 6a uses thirds, but this time we're fretting a mix of minor and major shapes. See how the D-F# interval is first notated with the 3rd finger (beat two), and then with the 1st finger (beat four)? While you can play both intervals with either finger, this shared arrangement facilitates the position shifts—the 3rd finger ascends, the 1st descends.

In Ex. 6b, we keep the same four notes on the second string (E, F#, G, F#) and harmonize it with a new line on the fourth string. Though it has the identical melodic contour as Ex. 6a, this new figure "weighs" more because it uses wider intervals—sixths. Use Ex. 6b when you need to fill harmonic space. In a large ensemble, the

Ex. 2

♩ = 76-88

Sassy

D7 (D9)

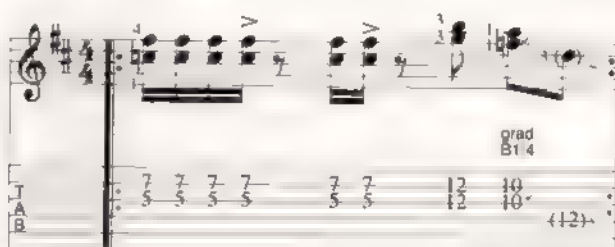


Ex. 3

♩ = 76-88

Greasy

D7 (D9)

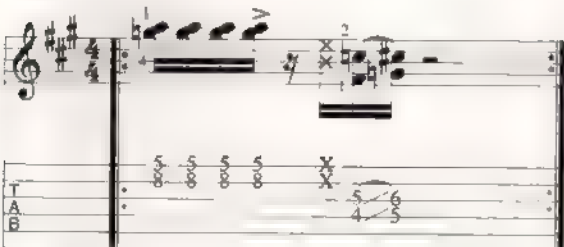


Ex. 4

♩ = 80-88

Punchy

A7 (A9)



Ex. 5

♩ = 152-176

Twangy

C (C7)



Ex. 6a

♩ = 66-84

w/ tremolo or rotary speaker

A7 (A9)



Ex. 6b

♩ = 66-84

w/ flange

A7 (A9)



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compact Ex. 6a would be more appropriate.

Both patterns are completely mobile. Try using a full dominant-7th barre (root on the sixth string) as a visual anchor. Once you can see these moves in relation to a barre A7, try moving up the neck to D7 and E7. Congrats! You now have two flavors of a I7-IV7-V7 blues comping pattern that will work in any key.

## DOUBLE YOUR PLEASURE

Master the art of inverting intervals, and you'll have twice as many accompaniment patterns at your disposal. For instance, take Ex.

Ex. 7a

♩ = 96-112

Festive

Ex. 7b

♩ = 96-112

Smooth

Ex. 8

♩ = 116-152

Lively

7a—a festive line composed of major and minor thirds. These intervals let you outline a progression—in this case, a I-V-IV-I in the key of G—while staying very melodic. As you move through the four chords, listen to the lower voice (it's on the second string).

Now, try Ex. 7b. Here, we've dropped what was the higher voice down an octave, so now the second-string line is the top voice. As mentioned earlier, when you invert thirds, they become sixths.

Thirds evoke a mariachi band, and sixths emit a country or Memphis R&B vibe. Thirds are compact, sixths are wide, and both sounds are essential to chordless comping.

In each phrase, the intervals on beats one and three contain the root and 3 from the chord of the moment. On the other beats, the intervals shift between chord tones and non-chord tones. The latter are piquant passing tones that beg for resolution, while the for-

mer reinforce the harmony.

Pay attention to the fretting-hand fingering and notice how one digit stays in contact with the string for the entire passage. In Ex. 7a, it's the 1st finger that functions as a guide, while the 2nd finger assumes this role in Ex. 7b.

## SAMBA AND SOUL

Jazz's mainstay progression is the venerable IIm7-V7-Imaj7. It's easy to sketch this cadence using intervals, as you'll see in Ex. 8. Here, we're playing a lively, two-bar samba rhythm during the IIm7-V7 change, but you can mate these intervals with virtually any beat and tempo.

Here's an idea: Move the IIm7-V7 portion through different keys before you finally hit the Imaj7. For example, try back-cycling in fourths through the keys of A, D, and G, using the syncopated samba rhythm and interval shapes shown in Ex. 8.

- First, play Bm7 and E7 (IIm7 and V7 in the key of A) in the seventh and sixth positions.

- Next, move to the twelfth and eleventh positions to play Em7 and A7 (IIm7 and V7 in the key of D).

- Finally, drop down to the fifth and fourth positions to play Ex. 8's Am7, D7, and Gmaj7 figures.

Repeat each IIm7-V7 segment (for a total of four bars) before switching to the next key. If you tape these changes, you'll have a snappy and challenging accompaniment for practicing melodic improvisation. To give yourself ample time to explore these three keys, try tracking the entire back-cycling extravaganza three or four times in a row.

The groove in Ex. 9a works equally well for big-band R&B, raunchy Chicago blues, or funky, organ-driven soul-jazz. Give each interval its full value—you want a sustained, legato sound—and let your 2nd finger glide along the fourth string as you shift positions.

Here, we've notated the groove as a compact V7-IV7-I7 change in the key of A, corresponding to bars 9, 10, and 11 of a 12-bar blues. It's up to you to unsnap each bar, reconfigure the moves into a full 12-bar progression, and add





# chordless comping

a turnaround of your choice in bar 12. (Need some turnaround ideas? See "Blues Boomerangs" in the Mar. '00 GP.) Once you've done this, be sure to drag these moves into several other keys.

Ex. 9b shows how to finger the same soulful sixths on strings three and five, instead of strings two and four. If you memorize both sets of shapes, you'll have two locations to

## Ex. 9a

♩ = 92-116

Churchy

play this groove in any key. The trick is to visualize the starting chord's assumed root.

- When you're cruising on the second and fourth strings (as in Ex. 9a), the unplayed root lurks on the third string. It's located on the same fret as beat one's two fingered tones.

- When you're squeezing the third and fifth strings on beat one (Ex. 9b), the silent root lies on the fourth string, sharing the same fret as the lower voice.

## POWER GRIPS AND A BIT O' BO

How would we cope without power chords? The classic power chord is, of course, composed

of the root and 5 played on wound strings. But there are other options besides the resulting fifth, as evidenced by Ex. 10, which includes fourths and a sixth. The interval changes are subtle, but they add momentum and drama to what would otherwise be a static part. Add some crunchy distortion, palm mute the bass strings, and gradually bring the riff to a boil.

Now let's honor Bo Diddley with—whoa—power seventh chords. Ex. 11a shows his namesake beat, the classic "shave 'n' haircut, two bits" rhythm. Typically, you'd pound this out using open-position chords—A and D or E and A. Those I-IV changes sound super with the Bo Diddley beat, but as a scratchy alternative, try

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Ex. 11b. With some subtle palm muting, you can choke the strings and turn your guitar into a wiry percussion instrument. Add some fast tremolo and you'll have a swampy groove that sug-

gests a dominant-7th chord, yet leaves plenty of room in the higher registers for other instruments or vocals. We're fretting the root and ♭7 of A7 (A and G) and G#7 (G# and F#)

## MELODIC RHYTHMS

In Ex. 12a, we juggle two lines. Composed of eighth- and sixteenth-notes, the top line is melodic, while the bottom line plays a

Ex. 9b

♩ = 96-116

G7

Ex. 11a

4/4



Ex. 10

♩ = 116-138

Crunchy

B5

F#5

Ex. 11b

♩ = 88-100

w. throbbing tremolo

A7

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# chordless comping

supporting role and sticks to quarter- and half-notes. Heard together, these lines create a complex series of intervals that range from a major second (A-B) to a minor seventh (F#-E). Pop and country ballads often feature this type of ornate melodic rhythm accompaniment over a strummed acoustic background. Try this with a smidge of reverb and some slow, subtle trem. Make sure you sustain the low notes for their full value.

## Ex. 12b

♩ = 69-84  
Majestic

(I) A (IV) D (III) Bm D A

pre-B R

Ex. 12b features the stirring sound of sliding fourths and the lonesome twang of fourths hammered into thirds. The surprise comes in bar 3, where you ascend using a mix of inter-

vals: perfect fourths, major sixths, a major third, and a minor sixth.

Bar 4 features a bona fide pedal steel lick. To nail the first half, you need to set up a perfect

## Ex. 12a

♩ = 116-138  
Moody

(I) A (V) E (IV) D (I) A

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## chordless comping

fifth prebend, and then relax back to a minor sixth shape. A steeler would use a pedal to change the minor seventh (E-D) in beat three to a minor sixth (F#-D), but on the 6-string, a gentle hammer does the trick.

## CUTTING THE CHORD

As we've seen in these examples, rhythm parts composed of intervals can be graceful or gnarly, tangy or sweet. Ironically, the more you learn about constructing chords, the easier it is to comp without them. Once you adopt a "sans chord" mindset, you'll start hearing harmony in a new way. Small horn sections are a good source of inspiration, as are vocal duets. Perhaps the most compelling feature of the guitar is its ability to express both singing melodies and big, chiming harmony (pianos don't sing, and saxes can't comp). Chordless comping splits the difference between these two musical extremes and puts a third option at your fingertips.

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SRV kicks back  
at the Keystone  
Berkeley in 1983,  
playing "Lenny"  
on the guitar of  
the same name.



# TRIGGER FINGERS

HOW STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN  
PLAYED HIS WAY OUT OF THE  
CLUBS AND INTO LEGEND

**I**

was into that guy before *anyone*." That's a common refrain among guitarists. Recognizing a great player before it's fashionable to do so is a point of pride in the guitar playing community. After all, no one wants to look like some fair-weather, bandwagon-jumping fan. ■ The thing is, there was no such thing as a blues bandwagon for anyone to jump on in the early '80s. >>>

BY MATT BLACKETT



# TRIGGER FINGERS

New Wave bands like the Go-Gos and Men at Work shared the airwaves with pop rockers such as Journey and Foreigner. The closest thing to a blues-based guitar hero was Eddie Van Halen, and a 1-IV-V shuffle was about as uncool as you could get. That all changed overnight when a guitar slinger from Austin, Texas, named Stevie Ray Vaughan exploded on the scene in 1983.

It's difficult now for most guitarists to remember a time before SRV. His tone, style, and stage show have all become popular-music benchmarks. But that was *not* the case when Vaughan first set the world of guitar on fire. Most guitarists went from never having heard of the guy to not being able to get away from him. Turn on rock radio and you'd hear a

track off Vaughan's slamming debut album. Switch to a pop station and there he was again on David Bowie's *Let's Dance*. It seemed to happen so suddenly that it was easy for some to think that Vaughan hadn't paid his dues.

The fact is, Vaughan and his band, Double Trouble, did their time playing dive bars and lousy gigs as much as anyone. When things *did* start to click for SRV, each new break was plagued with difficulty. And when the red carpet was finally rolled out, Vaughan paid dues with every step he took on it.

Nowhere was this "best of times, worst of times" dichotomy more obvious than at the 1982 Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland. Without a doubt the biggest gig of Vaughan's career, the festival would hopefully be his ticket out of the dives and into the big time. It proved to be exactly that, but not before SRV would go through yet another trial by fire, which is immortalized on the new, two-CD *Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble—Live in Montreux 1982 and 1985* [Sony]. Montreux would also lead to Vaughan guesting on the huge pop record that would further his legend and reputation, but even *that* break would turn into a brutal rite of passage.

By the time SRV returned to Montreux in 1985, he was at the top of the blues guitar heap, and it was just another gig where everyone loved him. The following recollections, however, are from the people who worked with Vaughan *before* he became famous. As his bandmates, guitar tech, producer, and admirers, they recognized his genius before anyone else, and they are best able to paint the picture of SRV on the verge of becoming a superstar.

## THE ROAD TO MONTEUX

"I first saw Stevie play in early 1977," recalls Double Trouble drummer Chris Layton. "I was awestruck."

"When I saw Stevie, it was like a revelation," adds bassist Tommy Shannon. "That's where I wanted to be. When they called me, that was one of the happiest days of my life."

The band started working the Austin/Lubbock/Houston/Dallas circuit, but was unable to take things to the next level. "Before the Montreux show, we were mostly doing club gigs in Texas," says Layton. "We'd gone to the East Coast twice and the West Coast once—all



Paul Ray and the Cobras in 1976. The Cobra at the far right is a young Stevie Vaughan.

low-dollar gigs."

"We were traveling around in a milk truck," elaborates Shannon, "with a bed rigged up on top, a couch for a back seat, and all of our gear crammed in there. We were living lean."

Despite all the struggles, Vaughan's reputation was growing, and the band's slamming live shows were impressing audiences, regardless of size. "We always played with enthusiasm and excitement," says Layton, "even if we were only playing to five people. And we never got a bad reception."

For the most part that seems true, but Shannon does remember a particularly rugged gig. "We opened for the Clash in Austin," he says, "and people were yelling and throwing stuff and telling us we sucked. We were supposed to do two shows, but we told them we weren't doing the second night. For some reason, I don't remember that hurting our feelings too much, though."



Swiss Miscreants (left to right): Layton, Vaughan, and Shannon touch down in Switzerland.

## SWISS BANK

While Vaughan and company were slugging it out in the clubs, they crossed paths with veteran R&B producer Jerry Wexler, who was so taken with the band that he arranged to get them on a really prestigious gig—blues night at the Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland. "I had played the Montreux Festival with Johnny Winter in 1969 and we went over great," says Shannon. "I told the guys how beautiful it was. I had nothing but good memories."

Layton recalls feeling a nervous excitement about the gig. "Stevie and I had never been to Europe, and we were excited by the prospect," he says. "But it was going to cost us over \$15,000 to go, and we had to get a loan from our management group. Even though it seemed risky, Stevie thought we should give it a shot because we were doing the same clubs over and over. People loved us, but we wondered where we were going with it."

So off they went to Switzerland with the intention of taking the country by storm. Sitting



# NILE RODGERS ON LET'S DANCE

**BY 1982, NILE RODGERS WAS ALREADY A** world-renowned guitarist and producer with platinum albums to his credit. He was doing pre-production for what would become David Bowie's landmark *Let's Dance* when Bowie excitedly informed him that he wanted to use an unknown guitarist from Texas named Stevie Ray Vaughan on the upcoming sessions.

—MB

*Were you in Switzerland during the Montreux Festival?*

Yes, but I didn't go to the show. David did, and he said, "Man, I heard a fantastic guitar player last night!" He had never heard of him before, and Stevie's playing just blew him away.

*Were you okay with the idea of using him on the record?*

If David Bowie makes a suggestion, you've got to listen to it. I was curious, but because I hadn't seen the gig, I had no idea what Stevie would add. I didn't even know he was a blues player. David just told me, "I know this is going to be cool." David has an incredible history of finding unique guitar players, so I was expecting something amazing, but I didn't know what.

*What did you think when Vaughan showed up?*

My first impression was that Stevie was a really, really nice guy. When I finally heard him play, I'll be honest—I didn't get it. I thought he sounded so much like Albert King that I was offended. I thought, "David, if you want this trip, why don't we just call Albert King? At least people have heard of him!"

*So, you didn't think it would work?*

The concept was very weird at first. I mean, try to get into my frame of mind as a producer who is trying to make David Bowie hip and new and interesting. Today it's totally accepted to have a blues element on any kind of record, but in 1982, no one was claiming to be a blues fan. But it only took a matter of hours before I not only got it, but I was digging it and having more fun than you can imagine.

*Did Vaughan track loud?*

Oh, yes! He stood in the control room with us, and his amps were just *blasting*. It was the loudest thing I'd ever heard in my life. I was fine with it, though, because Stevie's sound was very soothing. It didn't make you cringe like some loud tones can.

*How much direction did you give him?*

Not much. We just turned the tape on and let him rip. He would find the key and just go off.

*Were you looking for complete performances, or would you punch in sections?*

Almost all of my work with Stevie over the years was about complete performances—there was very little punching. I didn't comp any tracks for the *Let's Dance* sessions, but for the Vaughan Brothers' *Family Style* I used a Synclavier to move performances around and Stevie loved that. He'd go out there and use the Synclavier himself, and I thought, "Oh god—what have I done?"

*How do you view his place in history?*

He's right up there with the best of them. No question. To come along at a time when nobody was digging the blues, and to not only make it a credible art form, but also to pave the way for so many after him—that's incredible. But even if you forget about all that and just listen to his playing, it's magical. I really miss him, man. I think about him a lot. He was a virtuoso—right up there with greats like John McLaughlin, Wes Montgomery, and Julian Bream. Stevie had the gift.



"Stevie's sound turned every listener into a blues fan," says Rodgers.



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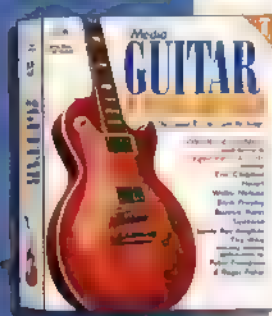


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# TRIGGER FINGERS

backstage before going on only served to heighten the excitement for the band. "Larry Graham came up to us backstage and told Stevie, 'I've heard about you. I know you're a badass guitar player,'" remembers Layton. "That was way cool, because we were huge fans of Sly & the Family Stone."

Shannon was particularly jazzed to meet one of his bass heroes. "Graham is one of my favorite bass players," he says. "He's so innovative. He asked if he could jam with us during our encore on 'Johnny B. Goode.' Stevie was really pumped up then—not just about the gig, but also about the chance to jam with Larry Graham."

Certain factors, however, would prevent the set from being all that SRV had hoped it would be. "I noticed that there hadn't been any other electric bands up until we went on," says Layton. "It occurred to me that we were going to be quite a contrast—Stevie had a couple of amps up there, and we always played loud. But it never entered our minds that we might not go over."

"It was all acoustic acts," adds Shannon. "We shouldn't have been playing that night. We came out blasting, but we didn't think anything of it. People were always telling Stevie he was too loud, so nothing seemed out of the ordinary."

What *was* out of the ordinary was the crowd's response. Almost instantly people started booing, and the boos would persist for SRV's entire performance. Roots legend John Hammond, Jr. opened the show that night and vividly recalls the events. "When I did my set, the crowd response was amazing," he says. "It was one of those magical nights. I had heard Stevie before that night, because he was already legendary as a guitar wizard in blues circles. And he was always very respectful to the blues. The only radical thing was the volume, and that was his undoing at Montreux. He was so loud it was overwhelming. He was playing his ass off, but he lost the crowd by his second song. People weren't hearing the *music* because of the volume."

Darryl Pitt was the staff photographer at Montreux for nine years, and he worked the '82 show. Despite having heard countless amazing musicians over the years, Pitt knew instantly that he was witnessing a unique talent. "This guy I had never heard of came out and

## TEXAS TECH SUPPORT

### DON OPPERMAN WAS STEVIE RAY

Vaughan's tech at the time of the Montreux festival in 1982. Here he recalls the gear, tricks, and psychology he used to help SRV do his thing.

—MB

"I first met Stevie in the late '70s," says Opperman. "I was working with Joe Walsh at the time, and I had no interest in working with a blues band. I didn't actually hear Stevie play until 1981, when he opened for George Thorogood in Albuquerque. I walked into the show, and it felt like seeing Hendrix for the first time. I was just awestruck at how well this kid could play. I started teching for him shortly after that."

"I was at the Montreux gig in '82. Stevie brought guitars and his pedalboard—he didn't bring his amps. For guitars, he had #1, his famous '59 Strat. That was the only one that would really stay in tune when he threw it on the ground. He also brought Lenny, which is a '62 or a '63 woodgrain brown Strat, and a Strat called Butter—a guitar originally owned by the guy from Vanilla Fudge. Butter was routed for four humbuckers at one point, but Stevie just had a DiMarzio single-coil in the neck position. The only other guitar was a 3-color sunburst Tokai. As I recall, he played all of those that day."

"I would string Stevie's guitars with whatever gauges we had in the string box. I'd start with .011s, and when those ran out we'd go to .012s or .013s. The low strings were GHS semi-flats—a roundwound string pressed into a flatter shape—because he liked their low-end response. In fact, that's how we would set up his amps—he'd pop the open low-E with his finger and tweak the amp until that one note sounded right to him. His action was incredibly high—about 1/4" off the fretboard. I couldn't believe he could bend the strings, but he did. The guy had amazing strength in his hands. He used heavy picks, but not the pointed end—he would use the butt end. He would also rub the pointed end on the carpet to round it off."

"Stevie's pedalboard was really simple—just an MXR loop selector, an Ibanez Tube Screamer, and a Vox wah. Before I built the pedalboard, [SRV's manager] Cutter Brandenburg used to run out onstage with a wah pedal and unplug Stevie's cord from the amp and plug the wah in! The loop selector sent his signal either directly to his amps or through the effects. When it went to the effects, it would hit the Tube Screamer first, and then the wah—which is the opposite of how most guys do it. It's a Joe Walsh trick that I passed on to Stevie. He liked the way the wah sounded better when it came after the Tube Screamer—he got a little more tone out of it. I would also tweak Stevie's wahs to tune them. I'd open up the wah, and with the pedal in the toe position, I'd rotate the pot until it was at the frequency Stevie wanted. He knew how much treble he needed out of it."

"When I worked with Stevie, he was using two Fender Vibroverbs for his dirty sound and he got his clean sound from a Marshall Club and Country 2x12 combo. He didn't have his amps for the Montreux gig, so he played through two blackface Twins. We spent a lot of time working with them, mostly messing with the EQ, and we had a lot of problems with the volume that day. Stevie was used to people telling him he was too loud, but he wouldn't turn down. The sound that he's so famous for is based on volume. He did make some concessions because they were recording that day, so he let me tip the amps back on their legs, and I put towels over them to try to reduce the volume a little. But Stevie had never played Montreux before, and he was going to give it all he had. He couldn't get the Twins to break up like his Vibroverbs, though, and his sound was a little brighter and cleaner than normal."

"I didn't see much reaction on Stevie's face until after the gig, and he was really bummed at the crowd's response. But he played great that night. I had no idea that all the connections would come from the Montreux show, but I definitely felt like Stevie was on the verge of being a big star."



SRV onstage in 1981. His manager, Cutter Brandenburg, lurks behind two Fender Vibroverbs and a Marshall 2x12.



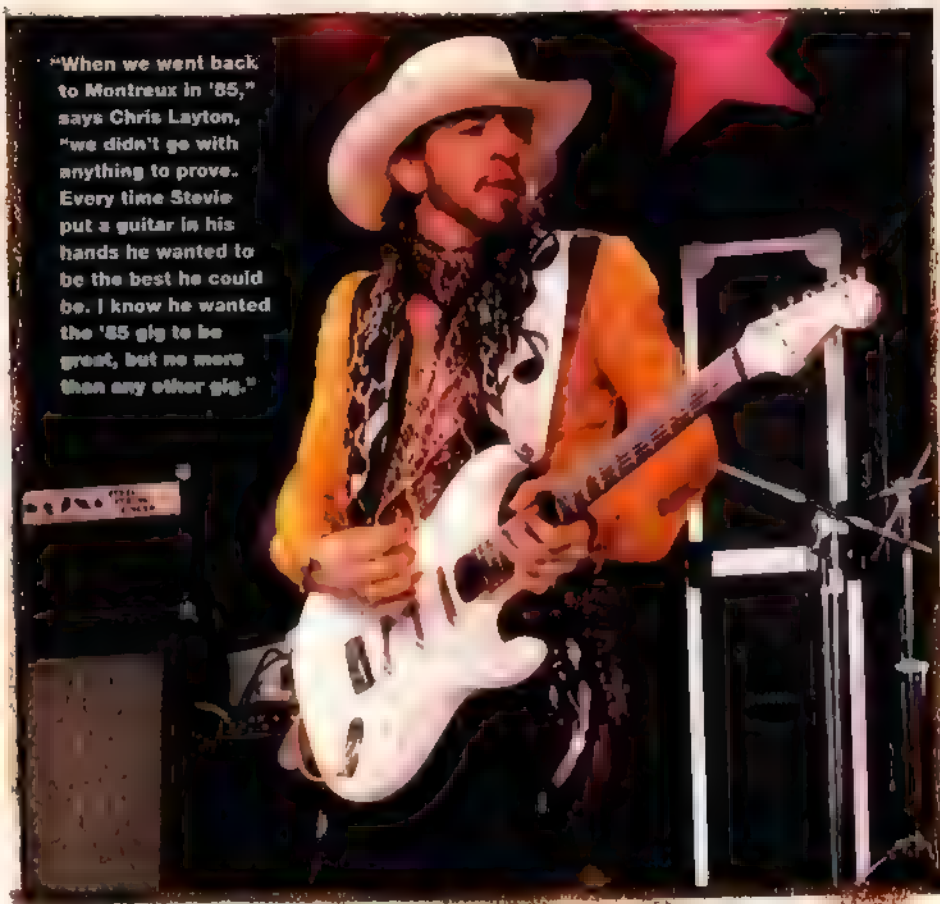
# TRIGGER FINGERS

started playing and stalking the stage and I was shaking," he recalls. "I was a blues fan, but I was not a fan of the schmaltzy blues revues that were successfully touring Europe at the time. There was nothing schmaltzy about Stevie—he was the real deal. I couldn't believe the crowd didn't get that. Then the boos started, and from where I was in the front row, the boos were a lot louder than what you hear on the recording. You could see it on Stevie's face later in the set—it got to him."

Pitt has a different take on why Vaughan wasn't better received that night. "In my opinion," he says, "it wasn't about acoustic versus electric. I think it was racist. I think the crowd turned on this white guy in the cowboy hat who they viewed as kind of a caricature. I believe Albert King would have gone over playing the exact same stuff."

While Pitt and Hammon were watching the

"When we went back to Montreux in '85," says Chris Layton, "we didn't go with anything to prove. Every time Stevie put a guitar in his hands he wanted to be the best he could be. I know he wanted the '85 gig to be great, but no more than any other gig."



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# TRIGGER FINGERS

PIET ROBERTS

drama unfold, Vaughan and his bandmates were living it, cranking out rocking versions of future classics such as "Pride and Joy," "Texas Flood," and "Love Struck Baby," despite the hostile crowd reaction. "I realized after the first song that we weren't getting to them," says Shannon. "You could look out there and see people frowning, and we could hear them booing. It hurt Stevie bad, but he didn't let up. He just kept doing what he does. He didn't panic or withdraw."

"Because I know Stevie so well," says Layton, "I could tell it was affecting him onstage. But he didn't change his approach. He wasn't arrogant about it, but his attitude was, 'If you don't like us, we're sorry, but we're going to keep on, because that's all we know how to do.' It was heartbreaking, though—especially for Stevie. When we finally got off stage he was like, 'Oh man, what just happened?'"



## MONTREUX POST MORTEM

As SRV was reeling from the shock of his performance, Pitt took it upon himself to find the

unknown guitarist and apologize for the crowd. "I went backstage," he recalls, "and I saw Stevie slumped on a roadcase with a bare light bulb hanging over him. It's one of the bleakest things I've ever seen. As the staff photographer, I should have snapped that picture, because it perfectly encapsulated what had just happened. But all I could think to do was tell him how great I thought he was, and that the crowd was totally wrong. He smiled and thanked me. Even though he'd been through this ordeal he was really warm and friendly."

Hammond also spoke with SRV after his set, and tried to reassure his fellow bluesman that this was a fluke. "He came off the stage in tears," says Hammond. "He was really vulnerable—there was no attitude. He just said, 'Aw man, we wanted to go over so big.' I told him that it was just one of those crowds and that he played great. Anyone who really listened knew he was great."

Unfortunately, the hostile crowd reaction wasn't the last indignity that Vaughan and Double Trouble would suffer that night. Being booed off the stage obviously meant no encore which also meant no jam with Graham. "We walked off stage," says Layton, "and we walked by some other band's dressing room, and there's Larry Graham going over 'Johnny B. Goode' with them! It added insult to injury."

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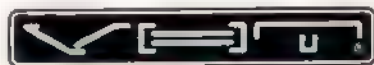
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# TRIGGER FINGERS

## SWISS CHEESE

However, two members of the audience were very impressed with Vaughan's playing that night. Meeting them would prove to be not only the turning point of the Switzerland trip, but arguably the most important contacts of Vaughan's entire career. The first was David Bowie: "Claude Nobs had run the Montreux Festival for many years," he recalls. "He knew I was a big R&B fan, and he thought I might enjoy this new kid. Come the show, blasting through a short but riveting set, SRV completely floored me. I probably hadn't been so gung-ho about a guitar player since seeing Jeff Beck with his band the Tridents."

Bowie and Vaughan talked after the show, and those discussions led to Vaughan playing on Bowie's huge *Let's Dance* album. SRV described the meeting in the August '83 issue of *Guitar Player*: "From what I understand, Bowie was looking for somebody who played this style anyway, and I was the one he picked. I didn't really know how it would fit in, since I hadn't heard the material and I didn't have any idea what the songs would sound like. I did know what kind of rhythm and blues David liked, because we talked about that."

The other fortuitous meeting that night involved Jackson Browne, who was so moved by Vaughan's playing that he offered to let him record for free in his studio in California. Those sessions would produce the master that became SRV's debut album, *Texas Flood*.

For Layton and Shannon, the words of praise from Bowie and Browne were a welcome relief from the catcalls during their set. "It didn't surprise me at all that Bowie and Jackson Browne loved Stevie's playing," says Layton. "Stevie appreciated it, but he didn't trip on it. Any time a big star told him they liked his work, he would smile and say thanks, but in his head he was thinking, 'Wow, you like me just like that guy over there who's an auto mechanic.' Everybody who liked his playing was just as important as the next person. He was a real statesman that way."

Vaughan and Double Trouble discovered after their set that no one was scheduled to play in the basement bar at Montreux, and they jumped at the chance to get back on the horse that threw them. "We thought, 'We came to play, so let's play,'" says Layton. "Jackson

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*Layton*

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Browne and his band stopped by and asked if they could jam."

"We felt a lot better by that point," adds Shannon, "and we played all night. When we left, I remember the sun coming up. It was a great jam."

## HOME AGAIN

What had started out so great and then turned horrible, was now looking up again. SRV and company came home, filled once again with a mixture of nervous excitement. "There was a bunch of stuff out there on the horizon and it was really interesting," recalls Layton. "At the same time it was a little scary, because Bowie had asked Stevie to play on this much-anticipated album of his, and there was talk of Stevie doing his tour. Tommy and I were worried that maybe our band was breaking up."

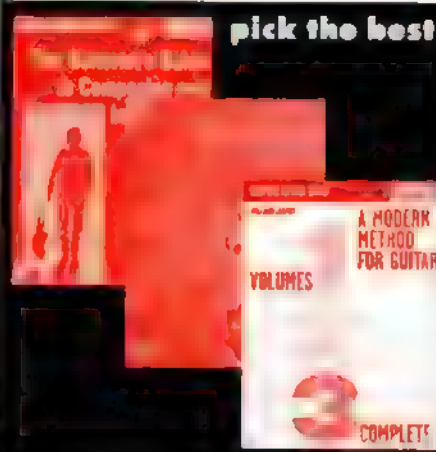
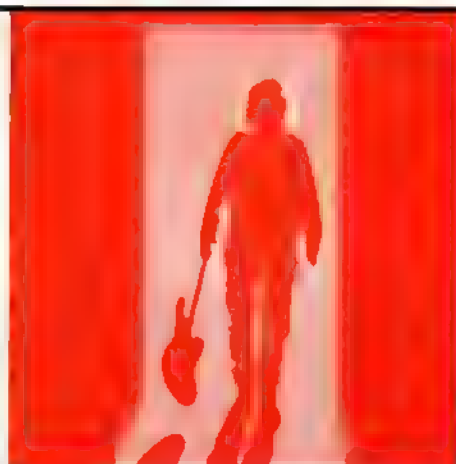
Over the Thanksgiving weekend in 1982, Vaughan, Layton, and Shannon went to Browne's studio in California to lay down tracks. The next month, SRV went to New York to record *Let's Dance*. "Stevie strolled into the Power Station and proceeded to rip up everything one thought about dance records," says Bowie. "He knocked down solo upon solo, and pulled notes out of the air that no one could have dreamed would work with my songs. In a ridiculously short time, he had become mid-wife to the sound that had been ringing in my ears all year."

Shortly thereafter, Vaughan began rehearsing for the biggest Bowie tour of all time. He never ended up doing the tour, and the reasons behind that decision remain unclear to this day. Layton recalls the conflicting emotions that SRV was wrestling with at the time: "The Bowie tour seemed like a great break for Stevie," he says. "But there were a number of restrictions placed on him, such as having his press interviews approved and orchestrated through Bowie's people. Stevie was kind of a wild stallion, and he didn't like people trying to fence him in."

"Then there was the money issue. Stevie was getting paid on a weekly basis, with the understanding that they would do a couple of shows, then have a couple of days off. Well, Bowie's people kept adding shows, which made Stevie's weekly pay less meaningful. The money got played up as the big reason why he quit, but I think it was less important than the fact that we were on the verge of having *our* record come out, and Stevie wanted to be able to give it his all. That was what he had always wanted, and he didn't want to wait for a year to push his own record."

"Stevie was really unhappy at that point," remembers Shannon. "He told me about the rehearsals where they wanted him to come down

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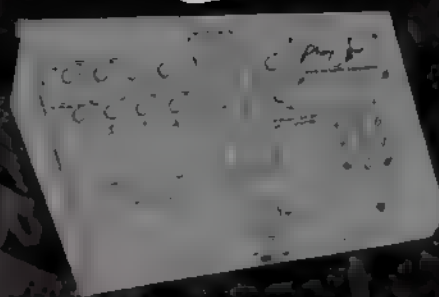
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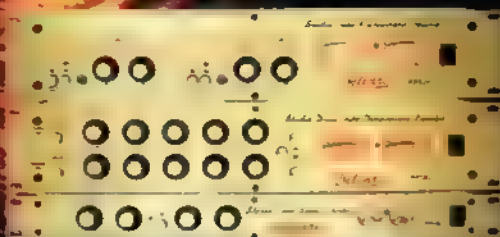
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# TRIGGER FINGERS

this ramp making all these rock-star moves. He could never do it—he just walked down the ramp. The guy was so dedicated to his vision that he couldn't be false, and he wouldn't bend that rule for anyone."

Vaughan was also dedicated to his band-mates, and he offered to pay them his Bowie salary in order to keep the band together in his absence. When he quit the Bowie tour, the news was greeted with relief and admiration from Double Trouble.

"All he said to me was, 'Man, I just couldn't do it,'" says Shannon. "I was really touched by his decision. I mean, the fact that in the midst of riding in limos and jets he could be happy to go back with us in our milk truck—that meant a lot."

SRV never said much about his split with the Bowie camp. He summed it up to *GP* in '83 by saying, "I learned a lot working with David Bowie, but I'm glad to be back with my own band again. That was always my main concern, right from the start."

What seemed like a public relations disaster—quitting a world tour that would expose him to thousands of new fans—was once again transformed into a music-biz coup. News of Vaughan's ballsy choice to remain true to his bluesman vision spread through the guitar community and garnered him an incalculable amount of street cred.

"We had a great publicist named Charles Comer," explains Layton, "and he spun the news like, 'This skinny little white blues guitarist from Texas is *not* doing the biggest tour of a real star. Where does this nobody get off refusing this total somebody? He must have a lot of guts.' As this story's getting played up, our record and Bowie's are out at the same time and everyone's talking about how it's the same guitarist. You couldn't have *planned* it any better than it worked out on its own."

"About a month later," continues Shannon, "we were touring California in our milk truck, and we pulled up to a club and there was a line stretching around the block. We'd played there before and the place was less than half full. We saw this crowd and wondered if we had the right club! Then the record started selling like crazy, and we were on our way. It was an exciting time, but in a lot of ways I wasn't surprised. I always knew Stevie was that great—long before he was discovered."

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# Reviews Blast from the Pass

## AUDIO

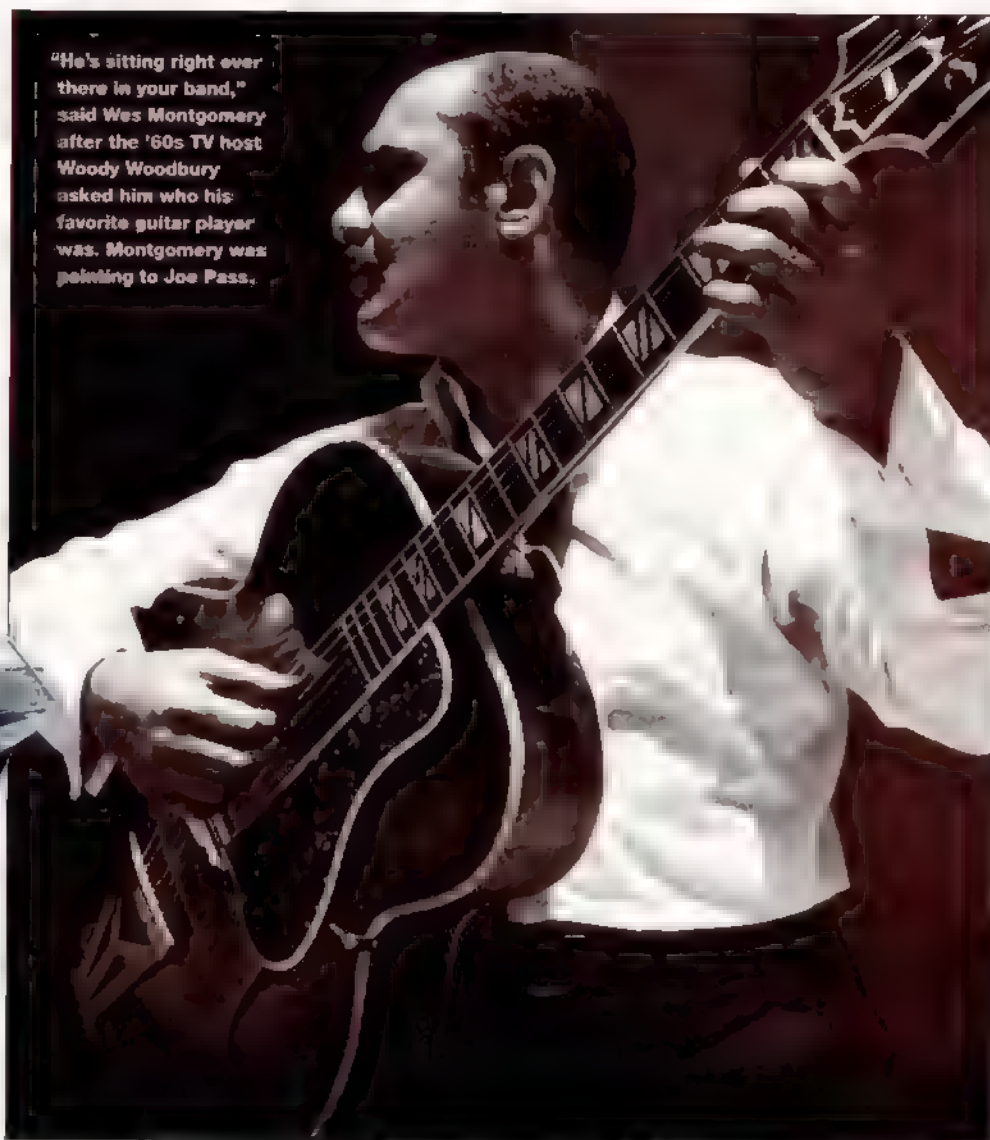


### Joe Pass

*The Complete Pacific Jazz  
Joe Pass Quartet Sessions*

**O**n December 18, 1960, a young Joe Pass—with just 13 cents in his pocket and a decade of aimless gigging and drug abuse behind him—checked himself into Santa Monica's Synanon rehabilitation center. It was a smart move. Not only did it save his life, it introduced him to Dick Bock of Pacific Jazz Records, who saw Pass playing his burning bebop lines with the facility's house band. Like a bright light at the end of a long, dark tunnel, Pass' transformation from lost soul to jazz icon had begun.

Jazz guitar fans of every stripe will rejoice with the release of *Sessions*, which contains all of Pass' explosive quartet sessions on Pacific Jazz. Not only are several Pass albums released on CD for the first time, you also get 30 previously unreleased tracks, and



a historical booklet that paints a stirring portrait of the late guitar legend as a young man.

Some Pass fanatics will skip straight to Disc IV for cool outtakes from Pass' celebrated *For Django* album—most interesting of which are the curious Hank Williams covers intended for television. Check out the spirited bossa version of "Jambalaya" to hear Pass tearing things up on electric 12-string. Other unearthed gems come from Pass' seminal *Catch Me!* sessions, including "Deep Purple," where

Pass lights up a Spanish guitar with dazzling chordal gymnastics.

When Pass was discovered by Bock, he was 30 and ax-less, playing his riveting brand of jazz on Synanon's Fender Jaguar, which you'll hear on the collection's early tracks. It wasn't until a generous fan presented Pass with a brand new '63 Gibson ES-175 (prior to *For Django*) that his tone warmed up considerably. The box set's timbral oddity may be the re-release of several movie themes played on acoustic 12-string. True Pass connoisseurs

might have preferred the inclusion of cuts from the *Simplicity* or *The Stones Jazz* sessions instead (though those weren't quartet albums). Honorable mention goes to Pass's stellar sidekick, rhythm guitarist John Pisano, who livens up countless tracks with his infectious, deep-pocket comping.

Though Pass had trouble holding on to guitars before he got clean, the one thing he never lost was his unparalleled mastery of the fretboard. That same skill catapulted him to international



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# Reviews

fame with the release of 1973's *Virtuoso* on Pablo Records. But even back when Pass was with Pacific, he could already play like his heroes: horn players and pianists. He delivered angular bop lines like Charlie Parker, and block-chord sorties à la Art Tatum. His chops stemmed from a blur of real-world performing experience and a brutal practice regimen endured as a child. (Pass' steel-working father forced him to practice guitar six to eight hours a day to escape a hard life in the mills and mines.)

Each track on this box set transports you to a sunny era when an outstanding young guitarist exploded on the west coast jazz scene. Note that this Joe Pass treasure chest must be purchased directly from the label, and that only 5,000 are available. Make that 4,999: this copy stays right here! **Mosaic** —JUDE GOLD

## QUICK HITS

**Rags to Rich's**, *Rags to Rich's*. Guitarist Richie Rebuth ignites his band's debut with red-hot country, surf, and pop chops. What a cool instrumental album! **R-Own**. —ART THOMPSON

**Jon Dee Graham**, *Hooray for the Moon*. A luscious, old-school rock vibe, courtesy of Graham and Michael Hardwick's gorgeous guitar tones and Graham's raspy, John Hiatt-style vocals. **New West**. —SHAWN HAMMOND

**Cracker**, *Forever Tasty*. Diverse guitar work on tunes that are often simultaneously psychedelic, folksy, funky, soulful, and hard-rockin'. **Back Porch**. —SHAWN HAMMOND

**Dean Brown**, *Here*. When Strat-wielding session ace Dean Brown calls on friends such as Marcus Miller, Billy Cobham, and George Duke, the sparks fly with gargantuan grooves, monster solos, and wide dynamics. **ESC** —JUDE GOLD

**Clinic**, *Internal Wrangler*. Sounding like a mix of pre-teen garage rockers and 20-something art-school flunkies, Clinic's avant-shards of guitar bolster haunting, left-of-center pop excursions. **Domino**. —DARRIN FOX

**The Realistics**, *real people are overated*. By mining less-common influences such as the Police and early XTC, the Realistics avoid the pop/punk doldrums with angular guitars, slick stop/start arrangements, and cunning melodies. **Tiswas**. —DARRIN FOX

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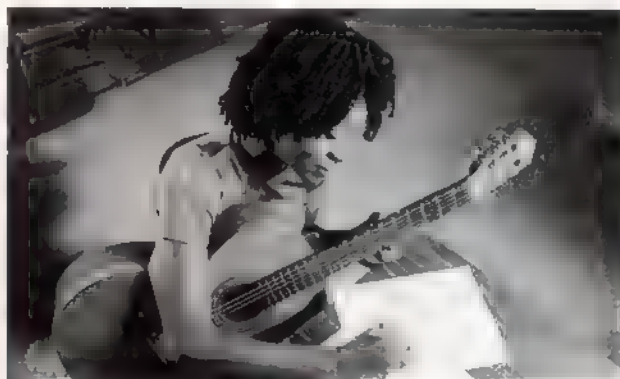
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## Reviews

### Various Artists

*Hava Narghile: Turkish Rock Music 1966 to 1975, Vol. 1*

Turkish psychedelia. Merely stringing the two words together invites poppy-powered dreams of gogo-booted belly dancers getting down to a soundtrack of swirling, modal guitar solos. And to a great extent, that's precisely the aesthetic you'll encounter on this superb compilation. The signature sounds of the Timothy Leary era figure prominently: whiny wahs, proto-prog-rock arrangements, oily combo organs, and cheap, bee-in-a-beer-can fuzz tones. So far, so great. But the 22 tracks assembled here offer more than belly laughs at the expense of someone else's bad trip. Many boast superb musicianship and ingenious arrangements. And while many other cultures swallowed the psychedelic aesthetic hook, line, and sitar, these Turkish rockers devised an exciting hybrid of Anglo/American attitudes and traditional Turkish modes, rhythms and instrumentation. Essential listening for sonic adventurers. **Dionysus.**

—JOE GORI

### Mercury Rev

*All Is Dream*

Mercury Rev is two groups in one. There's

the introspective quartet of the fragile falsetto vocals, winsome acoustic fingerpicking, and wise-sad songs in the Leonard Cohen/Neil Young vein. Then there's the team of sonic scientists specializing in eerily beautiful soundscapes. The band's instrumental approach merges analog keyboards, orchestral instruments, wordless soprano vocals, and reverb-sodden guitars into dark whirlpools of sound. Don't miss this disc, texture addicts—your drug of choice doesn't come much purer. **V2/BMG.**

—JOE GORI



### Various Artists

*Good Rockin' Tonight—*

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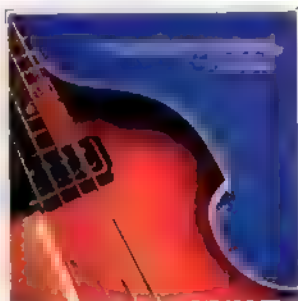
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## Reviews

mances by Paul McCartney and Scotty Moore, Chrissie Hynde and Jeff Beck (whose tasty riffing on "Mystery Train" is so restrained you'd hardly guess it's him), Jimmy Page and Robert Plant, Eric Clapton and The Impressions, and Van Morrison and Carl Perkins. Cameos by Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers, Matchbox Twenty, as well as a brash pairing of the Howling Diablos and Kid Rock on "Drinkin' Wine Spo-Dee-O-Dee" make *Good Rockin'* a very cool gathering of musical greats. **Sire.**

—SHAWN HAMMOND



### Various Artists

*Listen to What the Man Said: Popular Artists Pay Tribute to the Music of Paul McCartney*

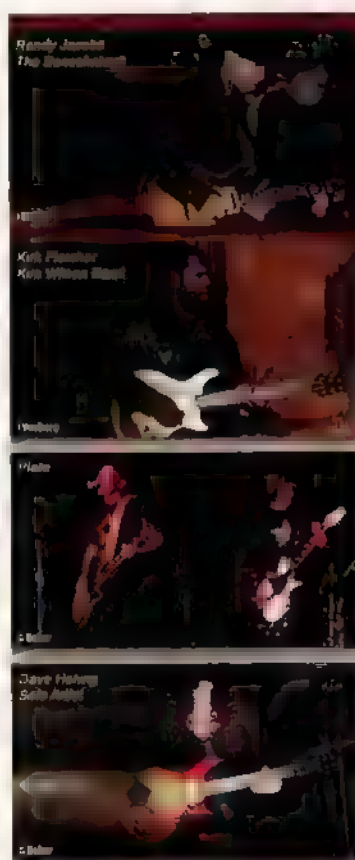
Tribute records are often doomed, because, at best, they'll make you want to listen to the original recordings. At worst, they're like a moustache on the Mona Lisa. This collection succeeds for a few reasons. First, the material *rules*. McCartney has taken a grossly unfair amount of grief over the years for his post-Beatles work, and this record proves yet again what a great songwriter he is. Sure, there have been a bunch of clunkers over the course of 20-plus albums, and there are a couple here, too, such as the questionable version of "Junk" by Steven Page and Kevin Hearn of the Bare-naked Ladies. But the spot-on cover of "Band on the Run" by Owsley, the pop-punk reading of "My Brave Face" by SR-71, and the guitar-driven version of "Maybe I'm Amazed" courtesy of the Virgos all more than make up for the low points. Other guitar highlights include Semisonic's "Jet" and a rocking send-up of "Coming Up" by the John Faye Power Trip. Paul is the Man. Listen to what he said. **Oglio.**

—MATT BLACKETT

### Kid Ramos

*Greasy Kid Stuff*

Ramos' guitar style is as muscular as his biceps, and greasier than the pomade in his mile-high pompadour. Backed by a streamlined rhythm section, Ramos finds plenty of



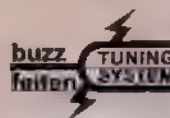
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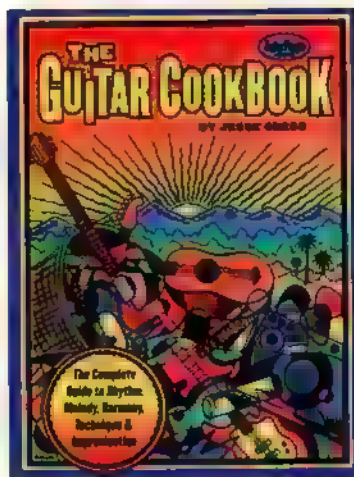
wide-open space to cut loose fingering snarling lines and fat double-stops that shimmer with rootsy vibe. He fills the solo spots with a barrage of tones—from hornlike blasts to stinging slices to sweet resophonic moans—and his rhythm playing is a textbook of groove. A star-studded cast of guests that includes Paul deLay, Johnny Dyer, Rick Estrin, James Harman, Charlie Musselwhite, Rod Piazza, and Lynwood Slim, make *Greasy Kid Stuff* one of the vibiest blues releases of 2001 Evidence.

ART THOMPSON

### The Guitar Cookbook

By Jesse Gress

With his vast teaching, touring, and transcribing experience, *GP* music editor Jesse Gress could have simply written a great technique book. But, he aimed higher. While many books will make you a better guitarist, *The Guitar Cookbook* helps you become a better musician. The 244 pages explore every fretboard approach you can think of, but it's the deeper currents that will make the *Cookbook* the king of your refer-



ence shelf. Whether Gress is explaining scales, chord theory, sight-reading, or improvising—or simply boggling your mind with several different harmonizations of “Mary Had A Little Lamb,” he strives to connect local topics with global truths about music.

Don't be overwhelmed by the *Cookbook's* massive grids, charts, and diagrams. They simply mark the intriguing place where science and music intersect. Digest all these recipes, and you'll have a sweeping command of the guitar and stand taller as a musician. **Backbeat.**

—JUDE GOLD ■

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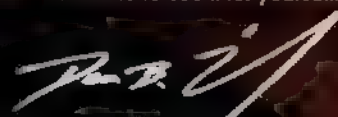
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## Bench Tests

# Hawaiian Punch

## Reverend Rocco

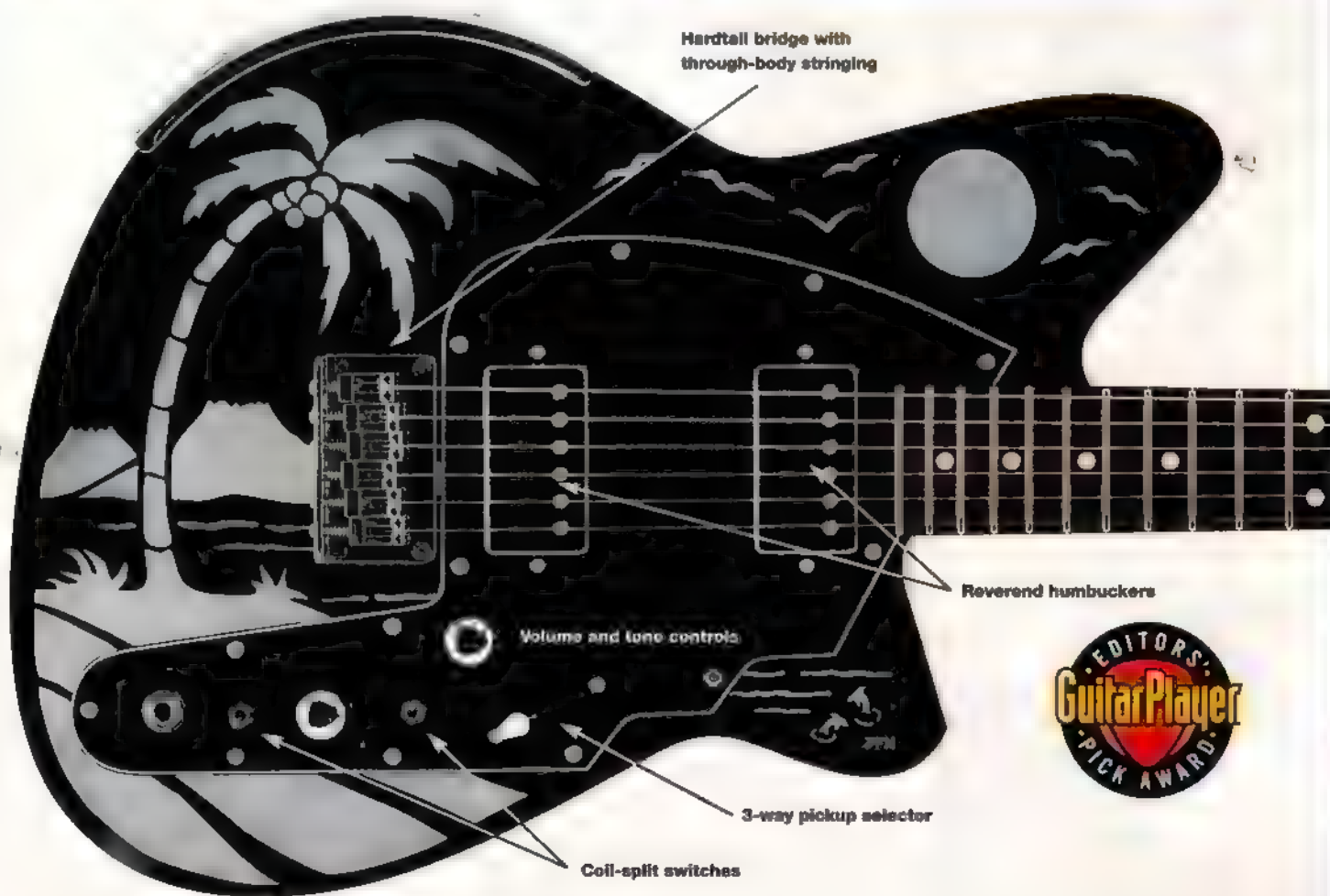
By Art Thompson

**A**s one of the few companies building bolt-on neck guitars that *don't* look like Fenders, Reverend has carved out a stylistic

niche with its engaging blend of swooping curves and art deco-inspired lines. The Rocco (\$1,199; \$1,499 as tested with etched-metal top and back) is Reverend's first

### Snapshot

With its retro-cool styling and optional etched-metal top and back, the Reverend Rocco (\$1,199; \$1,499 as tested) is both a sharp looker and a hip-sounding alternative to Fender-inspired humbucker guitars. This well-made instrument receives an Editors' Pick Award.



dual-humbucker model, and, like its predecessors, features a chambered body with a mahogany center block. The top and back are a composite of wood fibers and phenolic resin. Our test model also features optional overlays of thin polished aluminum, which are bonded to a phenolic backing, and beautifully etched with Hawaiian-style scenes similar to those featured on many '30s-era metal-bodied resonator guitars. (Other metal treatments are available.) The banjo-style armrest (another Reverend trademark) is a nifty touch, and the Grover locking tuners (which unlock the string with the twist of a screwdriver or a small coin) provide superior tuning stability.

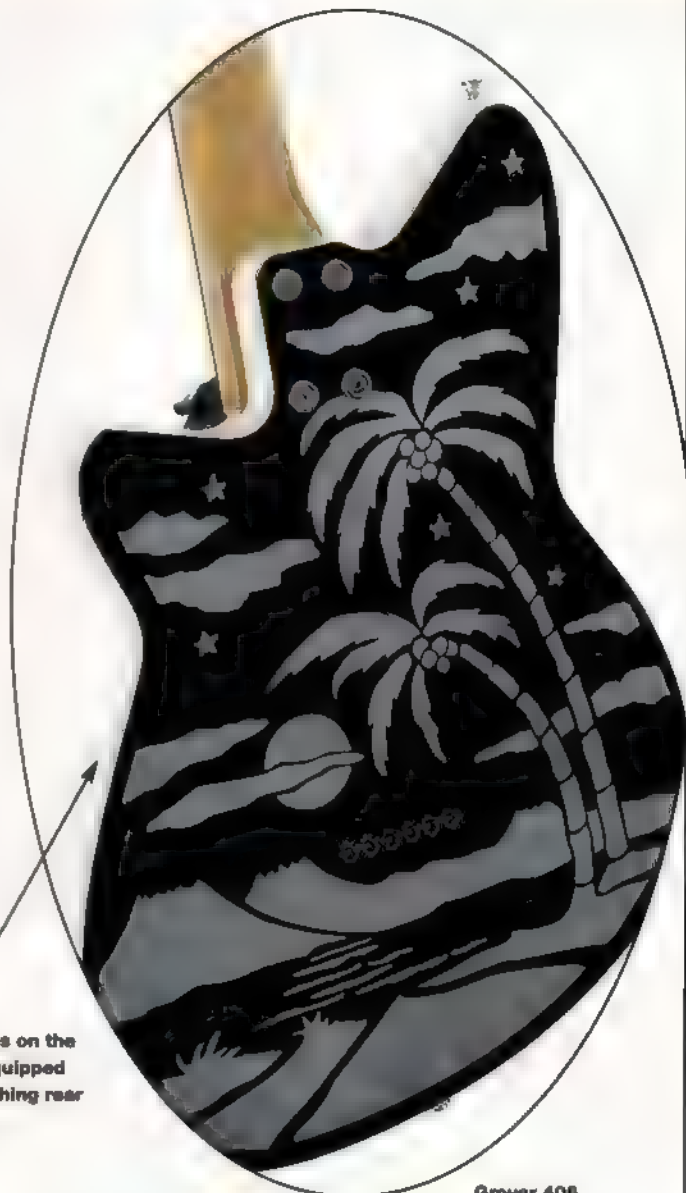
### Divine Details

The Rocco's construction is top drawer. The neck joint is super tight, the polished jumbo frets are well shaped and trimmed, and the satin-finished neck feels perfectly smooth. The combination of a low action and a relatively thin neck gives the Rocco a

sleek playing feel, and the deep cutaway provides excellent access to the high frets. All of the strings exhibited some minor buzzing above the 14th fret, but not enough to impact the guitar's tone or playability. Like its stable mates, the Rocco sports Reverend-made pickups—in this case, ceramic-magnet humbuckers with chrome covers. The electronics consist of master volume and tone knobs, a 3-way pickup selector, and a pair of mini toggles that allow you to use just the front coils of each humbucker

### Sonic Sermon

The Rocco's metal overlays enhance its already zingy acoustic sound, and you could probably record a decent rhythm track simply by sticking a mic in front of the guitar. Played through a variety of amps (a '50s Gibson Discoverer, a '60s Fender Twin Reverb, a reissue Vox AC30, a Victoria Double Deluxe, and a DR. Z Route 66), the Rocco delivered a rich tone that melded ringing clarity with humbucker



The Hawaiian theme continues on the Rocco's backside. On trem-equipped models, you can order a matching rear cover plate for an extra \$75.

Maple bolt-on neck

25 1/4"-scale rosewood fretboard

2-way trussrod

Grover 408 locking tuners

1 21/32" nut width

The Ratings Game		Tone	Playability	Workmanship	Hardware	Vibe	Value
Reverend Rocco		★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★

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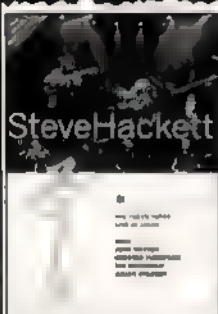
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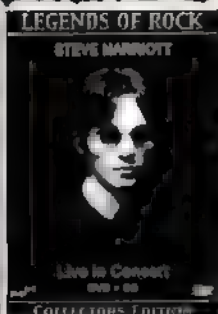
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# Bench Tests

## Hawaiian Punch —

meat. The guitar's bridge pickup offers a stout upper-midrange bark, and laying into it through a distorted amp yields a wicked moan that cuts nicely without excessive bite. The neck pickup also has a lot of midrange punch, and it sounds bright and detailed when run wide open for solos—think of a cross between

a Strat and an SG Standard. Switched to single-coil mode, the Rocco sounds crisper and airier and has considerably less output. Neither pickup sounds particularly Fender-like in single-coil mode, but many of the dual-pickup combinations yield lush, chimney tones that are very cool for chords and clean picking. The Rocco also scores major points for its superbly voiced tone con-

## Contact Info

Reverend Musical Instruments, 27300 Gloede, Unit D, Warren, MI 48093; (810) 775-1025; [reverendmusical.com](http://reverendmusical.com).

trol—no muddiness here—as well as its toneful volume knob that preserves the highs when you turn down.

While the Rocco isn't exactly a budget guitar, when you consider how much custom attitude, playability, and sound it delivers for about half the price of many

other American-made customs, this lightweight (6.5 lb) ax is a pretty amazing deal. A no brainer for blues players—and flexible and powerful enough to cut anything from country to hard rock—the beautifully made Rocco is a stylin' addition to Reverend's growing line.

## Tech Update DigiTech GNX2

**D**igiTech made a big splash in the effects pool in January 2001 with the introduction of the GNX1 (reviewed September 2001), a floor-style effects processor that not only provided a stout array of amplifier models, but also packed the processing power to run two models simultaneously. A particularly potent aspect of the GNX1 was its Warp control, which allowed you to blend the amps together in any ratio to create what DigiTech calls a Hypermodel. Now the new GNX2 (\$579) goes a major step further by adding ten distortion stompbox models that you can slap onto any of the unit's amp simulations.

The stompbox choices are a mix of classic and modern: Arbiter Fuzz Face, Boss DS-1 and Metal Zone, DOD Grunge and Overdrive 250, Electro-Harmonix Big Muff  $\pi$ , Guyatone OD-2, Ibanez Tube Screamer, Pro Co Rat, and Voodoo Lab Sparkle Drive. Each distortion model features adjustable gain and level, and either one or two EQ controls that mirror the knobs on the original pedals. For example, the Tube Screamer model has a single tone knob, and the Metal Zone packs mid-frequency and

mid-level controls.

Auditioned through a Victoria Double Deluxe and a Dr. Z Route 66, the GNX2's stompbox models sounded nearly identical to the real pedals. What's really surprising, however, is how authentically each model reacts to your guitar's volume. For example, you can crank up the Tube Screamer for a ballsy lead tone, and then bask in all those cool in-between distortion flavors as you roll down your guitar volume. No previous stompbox-modeling device has been able to pull off this trick so well, and the GNX2's Big Muff, DS-1, Fuzz Face, OD-2, and Rat models offer similarly authentic dynamic response. Another standout setting is Sparkle Drive, which—as with the original Voodoo Lab pedal—is basically a Tube Screamer with a separate control for blending in a boosted clean signal. The GNX2's model pumps out similar face-slapping grind, and the way it cleans up when you turn down your guitar volume is amazingly realistic. None of the models deliver the potent output levels of the real pedals, but given that they're mainly intended for use with the GNX2's virtual amplifiers, this really isn't an issue.

The GNX2's buzz-box selections cover the gamut for practically any playing situation (though the lack of an Octavia is a glaring omission), and about the only thing this device doesn't offer is the ability to run two stompboxes in series. Nevertheless, once you get a taste of what this superb device can do, don't be surprised if you find yourself brainstorming ways to work a GNX2 into your studio or live rig.

—ART THOMPSON





## Bench Tests

# One-Tube Wonder

## THD UniValve

By Art Thompson

**T**ubes have distinct sonic personalities, and one of the privileges of being a tube-amp player is exploring the myriad tonal colors that tube swapping can provide. Of

course, to really experience the tonal changes that occur with different tubes, you have to swap them in the same amplifier. This typically requires rebiasing the amp, and may also involve

### Snapshot

The UniValve (\$995) is a single-ended, class A amplifier that can accommodate a variety of different output tubes without having to be re-biased. The 15-watt amp features high/low voltage operation, a built-in Hot Plate power attenuator, and bypassable noise reduction. The UniValve receives an **Editors' Pick Award**.



The Ratings Game		Tone	Workmanship	Features	Vibe	Value
THD UniValve		★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★

The Rate-O-Meter: Dismal = ♥ —————> Excellent = ♥♥♥♥♥

rewiring the tube sockets. But not if you own the THD UniValve—a single-ended, class A amp that can digest a variety of output tubes without rebiassing.

The UniValve (\$995) accepts such popular octal-based tubes

as the 6L6, 5881, KT66, EL34, 6CA7, 6550, and KT88. The amp can also operate with a single EL84 when fitted with the optional THD UniValve Yellow Jacket base adapter (\$50). The UniValve's engraved front panel features vol-

ume, treble, bass, and Attitude controls, a noise reduction switch, an Attenuator control and bypass switch, a Hi/Lo voltage switch, and power and standby switches. The UniValve's single speaker out is switchable for 2Ω/4Ω and

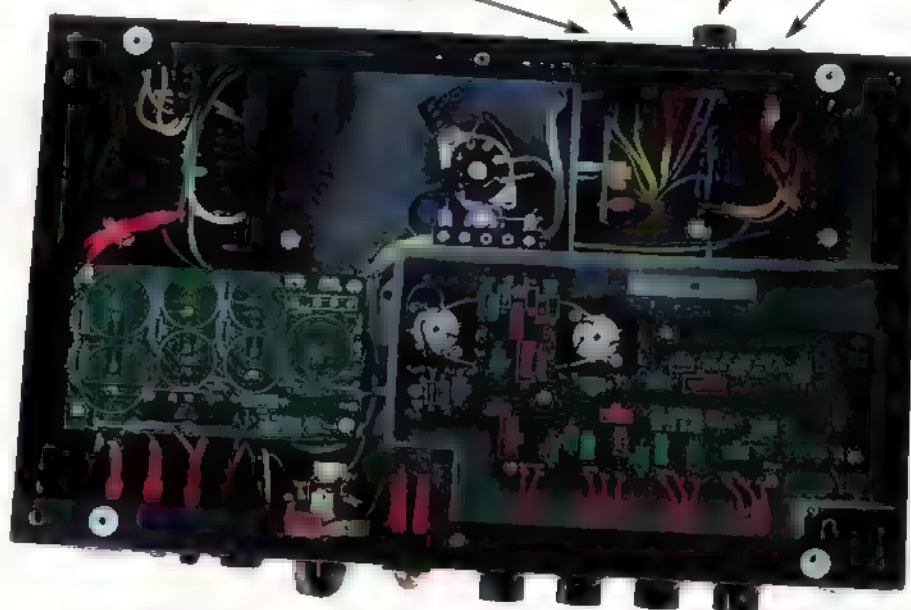
8Ω/16Ω loads, and the amp also sports a transformer-isolated line-out that features a level control and a switch for selecting line- or instrument-level signals. A built-in dummy load allows you to operate the amp without a speaker



Noise reduction switch  
Voltage switch  
Level switch (line/instrument)  
Line-out jack  
Line-out attenuation control  
Speaker-out jack



The optional UniValve Yellow Jacket base adapter allows a nine-pin EL84 to be plugged into the amp's eight-pin socket.





# Bench Tests

## One-Tube Wonder

connected for direct recording.

Accessing the tubes is merely a matter of undoing the captive thumbscrews that secure the perforated steel cover. The cover protects the tubes, and its side cutouts allow easy carrying. The interior of the steel chassis is exposed by removing the six screws that attach the bottom plate. The beautifully made circuit uses a trio of PC boards for the smaller components, while the pots, jacks, switches, and tube sockets are chassis mounted for ruggedness. The parts quality is grade A throughout, and THD's attention to detail is obvious in the neat soldering and clean wire routing.

## Sounds

With a pair of 12AX7 preamp tubes in place and a guitar plugged into the upper Rock input, the UniValve has a lot of gain

and is surprisingly loud—especially when connected to a 4x12 Marshall cabinet loaded with Celestion Vintage 30s. The UniValve is a very dynamic amp—it responds beautifully to guitar-volume changes—and its tone controls provide plenty of bottom and just enough treble bite without entering the shrill zone. Turning up the Attitude knob adds edge and aggressiveness, but it's not a presence control in the classic sense because the UniValve's output stage does not incorporate negative feedback.

## Tube Talk

I tried a number of different output tubes with the UniValve, and, sure enough, the amp sounded different with every one. Fitted with a vintage Mullard EL34, the UniValve delivered excellent, British-style crunch and lead tones. The mids were rich and focused, and the highs were

## Contact Info

THD Electronics, 4816 15th Ave N.W., Seattle, WA 98107; (206) 781-5500; [thdelectronics.com](http://thdelectronics.com).

clear and musical. It was easy to hear the outstanding qualities of this classic tube compared to the current EL34s. Switching to an N.O.S. (new old stock) GE 6L6 didn't exactly morph the UniValve into a Fender Twin, but the full bottom, spunky mids, and bright top-end elicited by this tube proved excellent for crisp rhythm playing and moderately distorted blues solos. With a 12AX7 installed—and a guitar plugged in the Rock input—the UniValve is actually a little too gained-out for roots styles. I obtained better American-style tones by swapping in an N.O.S. Sylvania 5751WA, which is a slightly lower-gain version of the 12AX7. (If you want *really* clean tones, the Roll input provides a dramatic reduction in gain.) The combination of the 5751WA and an old Tung-Sol

5881 was particularly devastating. With the amp's volume set around two o'clock, the overall gain structure was perfect for going between lead and rhythm via the guitar's volume control. The tone was a hearty blend of Fender clang and Marshall grind, and the Tung-Sol 5881 added cool twanginess to the rich distortion brew.

Installing an old GE 6550 produced a tighter and more muscular tone with punchy mids and explosive highs—AC/DC spoken here—while a GE JAN (joint army navy) 6V6 yielded a crisp, Fender-flavored sound with lots of complex grind. A surplus French Visseaux 6V6 upped the complexity and shimmer to near sinful degrees. Fitting a new Tesla EL84 nudged the UniValve back in a more English direction with Vox-like chime and harmonically



  
Seagull

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# KORG



## One-Tube Wonder

rich saturation—awesome for ringing chords and smooth, singing solos.

## Groovy Details

The UniValve's built-in Hot Plate power attenuator allows you to enjoy full output stage distortion at almost any volume. The circuit works by simulating the *reactive* impedance load of a speaker, and it enables your tones to remain ballsy and dynamic at whisper levels. Considering that a stand-alone Hot Plate goes for around \$350, this is very welcome standard equipment!

The UniValve also has a 2-position power switch that allows for operation at either 450-470 volts or 300-320 volts (depending on the output tube). Low-power operation chops the wattage in half, reducing the volume and mellowing the amp's aggressiveness. The UniValve is exceptionally low-noise, but activating the noise-reduction feature reduces the buzz from single-coil guitars and other sources by placing a small incandescent light in parallel with the speaker load. Here's how it works: When you're not playing, the bulb's cool filament is at a lower impedance than the speaker, which allows it to absorb the noise signal. As you start playing and the filament heats up, its impedance

suddenly jumps into the 150Ω range, and the majority of the signal is shunted to the lower impedance speaker. It's a brilliantly archaic noise gate (THD's Andy Marshall says the idea was conceived over 40 years ago), and you also get a nifty visual effect as the jeweled light brightens and dims in response to your playing. However, there is some loss of volume and punch when this function is active. I preferred the dynamic immediacy of the UniValve with its noise reduction bypassed.

## Uni for U?

The UniValve is an obvious choice for anyone who loves to "tone taste" with tubes, and this multiple-personality amp is also ideally suited for recording and rehearsals. Though 15 watts is undergunned for most live gigs, the UniValve is surprisingly loud, gushing, and three-dimensional. These qualities are partly due to its no-negative-feedback design (which is one of the reasons why Vox, Matchless, and other class A amps tend to sound so big for their wattage), as well as its hefty power supply, which can handle study tubes such as the 6550 and KT88. Just when you think there are no new tricks in the boutique world, THD has pulled a rabbit out of a hat with this baby. With its tonal range, smart features, and superb craftsmanship, the UniValve is a bang-for-buck winner.

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## Bench Tests

# Super Powers

## Bogner Überschall and Demeter TGA-2 Inverter

By Darrin Fox

**N**othing rocks like a 100-watt head. The sheer power and mayhem unleashed by a quartet of EL34s, 6L6s, or 6550s has made the 100-watter the traditional

weapon of choice for legions of rock guitarists—from Jimi Hendrix and Jimmy Page to Metallica and Limp Bizkit. The Bogner Überschall (\$2,700) and Demeter TGA-2 Inverter (\$1,999) play the

high-power game in slightly different ways. The Bogner is a carnivorous beast with tons of gain, while the Demeter sounds as classic as it looks. We auditioned both amplifiers through a Marshall

4x12 loaded with Celestion Vintage 30s. Test guitars included a Gibson SG, a Fender Telecaster, a 7-string Ibanez K-7, and a Fender Strat strung with .013s and tuned down to D.

Demeter  
TGA-2 Inverter

Four 6L6s

Half-power switch

Dual channels

Demeter  
amplification

Demeter  
amplification

TGA-2 INVERTER by James Demeter

Solo switch

## Bogner Überschall

In the early '90s, Rheinhold Bogner made a splash in the boutique world with his bulletproof, high-gain firebreathers. Over the years, his roster of clients has included Steve Vai, George Lynch, and former Alice in Chains guitarist Jerry Cantrell. Bogner's design goal for the Überschall was to create an amp voiced especially for the detuned crowd.

**Über details.** The Überschall looks clean and mean. The cabinet construction is first rate, the black Tolex is

flawlessly applied, and a slew of neat circuitry resides within the steel chassis. The output-tube sockets are firmly mounted to the chassis, and the preamp tubes are fastened to the circuit boards. To minimize microphonics from extreme gain settings, the board that grips the preamp tube sockets is shock mounted.

Each of the Bogner's two channels sports treble, mid, bass, presence, gain, and volume knobs. The only global control is a master volume. On the rear panel are an

## Snapshot

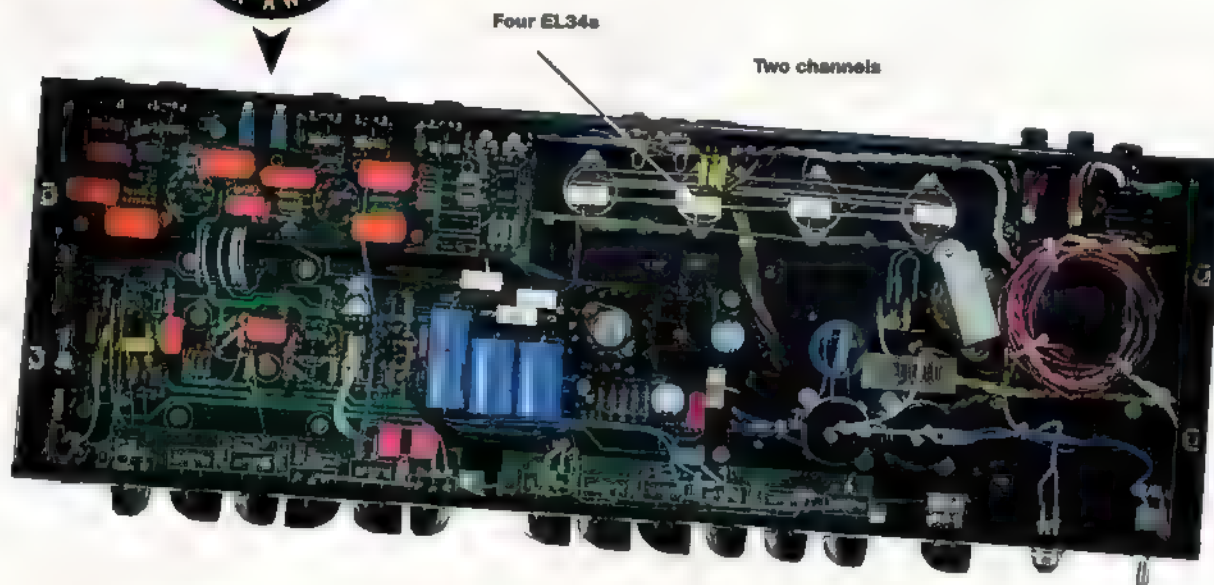
The Bogner Überschall (\$2,700) and Demeter TGA-2 Inverter (\$1,999) are high-powered boutique monsters that offer channel switching, tube-buffered effects loops, superior craftsmanship, and vibey tones. The Bogner Überschall receives an Editors' Pick Award.

impedance selector (4 $\Omega$ , 8 $\Omega$ , 16 $\Omega$ ), a line out jack, and a footswitchable, tube-buffered effects loop.

**Tones.** You quickly realize that this mother is *loud*. Although the four EL34s suggest 100 watts, Bogner says the amp is much closer to 150 watts. Channel 1 offers a clean, muscular tone with a preponderance of tough-sounding,

high-mid detail and no shortage of headroom (think of a Fender Twin Reverb that woke up on the wrong side of the bed). In fact, the only way to get any grind here is to crank the gain, and, even then, there's just a touch of warm crunch around the edges. Very nice.

Channel 1's nicely voiced EQ allows the Überschall to work



Four EL34s

Two channels



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Independent volume and tone controls



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# Bench Tests

## Super Powers

wonders for almost any guitar. The treble and presence knobs provided enough tone-shaping power to tame my very bright

Strat, and pull an extra bit of top-end from my SG (which really opened up the sound when running through a closed-back 4x12).

Channel 2 is where the Überschall really flexes its muscles. All

## Contact Info

**Bogner Amplification**, 11411 Vanowen St., N. Hollywood, CA 91605; (818) 765-8929; bogneramplification.com.

**Demeter Amplification**, 15730 Stagg St., Van Nuys, CA 91406 (818) 994-7658; demeteramps.com.

The Ratings Game		Tone	Workmanship	Features	Vibe	Value
Bogner Überschall		★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★
Demeter TGA-2 Inverter		★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★

The Rate-O-Meter. Dismal = ♥ —————> Excellent = ♥♥♥♥♥

## Gizmo Alert Z. Vex Ooh Wah & Super Duper 2 in 1

**M**inneapolis stompbox designer Zachary Vex once jokingly proclaimed his company motto to be "Crazy effects for rich people." You needn't be rich to use his pedals—which are fairly priced for top-tier designer gear—but a touch of craziness definitely helps.

Take the new **Ooh Wah** (\$400), which is an update of the \$350 Seek Wah, Vex's crazy, sequencer-driven wah pedal. As on the original, you dial in eight fixed-wah frequencies via a row of tiny knobs, while a ninth knob sets the tempo. The pedal then cycles through your chosen settings, generating everything from a mellow burble (when successive filter steps are set to neighboring frequencies) to choppy quacks and clicks (when you enter high-contrast filter values). A row of flashing LEDs indicates the tempo and active filter, and their relative brightness depicts—you guessed it—the relative brightness of each filter stage. A toggle switch also lets you specify four- or six-stage cycles.

The Ooh Wah's chief refinement is a random option, triggered by a second footswitch. In this mode, the pedal steps through its settings in no fixed order. The random mode is particularly cool with modest filter settings, where its complex pulsations can be a hip and hypnotic variation on tremolo. As with the Seek-Wah, syncing to tempo is tough, because there's no trigger input or tap-tempo switch. This means that you're more likely to use the Ooh Wah for trippy, asynchronous war-

bles and washes than precisely synchronized patterns.

The **Super Duper 2 in 1** (\$350) is another Vex update, this time of the \$185 Super Hard-On pedal. The original SHO is one of hippest clean-gain pedals ever, with a virile volume boost and a sparkling treble response that makes it a perfect match for vintage guitars with modest outputs. Like the name implies, the Super Duper is two SHO circuits in a single housing. But that isn't the only improvement: Vex has also added status LEDs and a master volume knob. Used alone, channel 1 is exactly like a SHO. But when you activate channel 2, the signal cascades into the second gain stage, followed by the master volume. The up-

shot: You can have three preset clean-boost levels, plus bypass. You might, for example, use channel 1 for a bit of extra sparkle and impact, channel 2 for a big solo boost, and both to make your point heard over ham-fisted bandmates. It's easy to depress both switches with a single footstomp. While the pedal unleashes positively absurd quantities of gain, it's really

more a surgical device than a weapon of mass destruction. The subtler settings are gorgeously transparent. In fact, the Super Duper sounded so radiant with my '63 Strat and a small amp that I made a mental note never to track the guitar without it.

—JOE GORE



**Z. Vex Effects**, Box 16511, Minneapolis, MN 55416; (952) 285-9545; zvex.com.



## Super Powers

of the power and volume of channel 1 is on hand, but with heaps of punishing distortion to spare. No matter how high you run the gain, however, the amp remains very musical sounding, and it cleans up amazingly well when you inch back your guitar's volume control. Channel 2's EQ is also voiced magnificently. The mid control has enough range to conjure clangorous kick or violent sucked-mid tones. And the presence control doesn't just intensify the treble. Crank it up and you hear a complex, high-midrange toothiness creeping in that enhances the already in-your-face tones.

Bogner's mission statement for the Überschall is extreme heaviness—play your wickedest Satan-summoning riffs and stand back. The tightly focused bass I was able to unleash with a detuned Strat and an Ibanez 7-string was nothing short of remarkable—even at deafening volumes.

Although the Überschall is geared towards new-metal players, many rock dudes would be hard pressed to find a more vicious sounding amp. The Überschall actually makes you *want* to tune down and riff wantonly.

### Demeter TGA-2 Inverter

Unlike the Überschall, the TGA-2 is all about refining—and subtly expanding—the blissful

wallop and shimmer of traditional tone. James Demeter made his mark designing high-end tube studio gear. In 1985, he introduced his first amp, the 100-watt TGA-3. Since then, Demeter amps have been the tools of choice for STP's Dean DeLeo, as well as slide masters Ben Harper, Bonnie Raitt, and Sonny Landreth.

**Form and function.** With its gold/black color scheme, the TGA-2's look is squarely in the Marshall camp. The Tolex is perfectly applied, and the gold piping beautifully outlines the front of the enclosure. The TGA-2's rugged steel chassis houses a large glass-epoxy board that's home to most of the handwired circuit components. All the wiring is neatly bundled and routed, and the output-tube sockets and pots are chassis mounted for extra strength.

The TGA-2's straight-forward front panel contains a set of treble, mid, bass, and presence controls, which are shared by the amp's two channels. Each channel has its own gain and master-volume knobs, along with two separate functions: a bright switch for the clean channel and a footswitchable Solo (gain boost) function for the lead channel.

**Sounds.** The TGA-2's clean tones flirt with traditional Fender flavors—slicing treble with nice, tauged lows—while simultaneously providing a slightly more aggressive midrange component. The EQ is subtle but effective, and, con-

sidering the shared controls, the clean channel's discreetly voiced bright switch is a welcome feature—although some humbucker-equipped guitars might require a little more treble snap to get a real spanky clean tone. (If you want a *brighter* bright switch, however, Demeter will consider all reasonable and practical requests for amp modifications.)

Going to channel 2 (Edge/Solo), the TGA-2 crosses the Atlantic into British territory. The gain control allows for myriad shades of detailed grind with both single-coil and humbucker guitars, and, thanks to the dynamic way in which the TGA-2 reacted to my SG's volume control, I was able to coax numerous tones from this channel—from Robben Ford-type sparkle to AC/DC-approved crunch. The Edge channel imposes a 20dB pad and adds high-frequency enhancement to emulate the bright channel of a vintage plexi Marshall, but you can return to full-out operation by switching in the Solo function. The half-power (triode) mode retains the amp's basic tone while softening the attack, but don't think you'll be able to dime this bad boy in your bedroom—this is, after all, a 100-watt amp.

If you're a player who lusts for vintage-styled sounds with some exciting twists, the TGA-2 gives you the features you need and, more importantly, smoking tones right out of the box.

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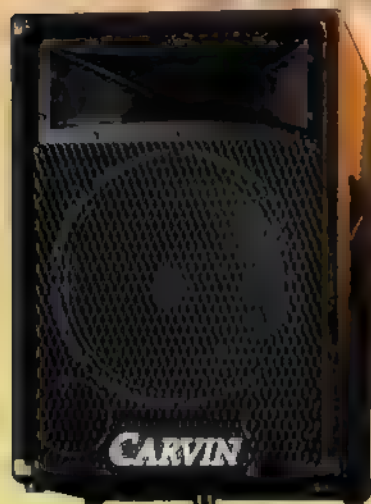
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# Exotica

## Woody Phifer Studio

By Jude Gold

**I**n an age when guitars—even good guitars—are mass-produced by the thousands, it's refreshing to examine a handcrafted instrument built with staggering attention to detail. The Woody Phifer Studio Signature model (\$4,999), created by upstate New York luthier Woody Phifer, is one of less than 20 of its kind (the series includes three models with different woods and pickup configurations), and the closer you look at it, the more there is to see.

Like a melted guitar plucked straight out of a Salvador Dalí painting, the Studio's most striking feature is its imaginatively sculpted body. Only the headstock facing is flat. The rest of the guitar—from its stunning quilted maple top to its paired walnut back—is meticulously hand-carved. The top is so curvaceous that even the pickup rings around the humbuckers have to be custom cut. Even if you prefer less adventurous body shapes, you'll be amazed by how the Studio's bold curves boost playability. The back's dramatic swoosh hugs your rib cage, and points the guitar at the optimum playing angle. And thanks to the insanely slender neck heel, the Studio will give you new enthusiasm for high notes.

As you study this guitar, a running theme begins to emerge: Wherever possible, the hardware has been hidden or made of wood. For example, the volume and tone knobs aren't plastic or metal. Instead, they're handmade from laminated maple and walnut. The adjustable bridge, aside





## Exotica

from its brass saddles, is solid ebony. And the trussrod and backplate covers match their surroundings perfectly, because they're made from the very wood that was cut away to accommodate those assemblies. Although the middle pickup's mounting plate looks matched as well, it's actually a "B-matched" piece from the pickup cavity. Here's the reason: the middle pickup easily unplugs—without de-soldering—for two-humbucker use, and the A-matched piece is included to pop in the hole. Clever!

By hiding many of its screws, the Studio maintains a clear complexion. Notice that the

5-way switch is screwless, the strap buttons are nearly hidden in the body (Dunlop Straplocks are required to wear this guitar), the custom brass tailpiece is halfway submerged (only one screw holds it in place), and the sunken bridge's height-adjustment screws are all but invisible.

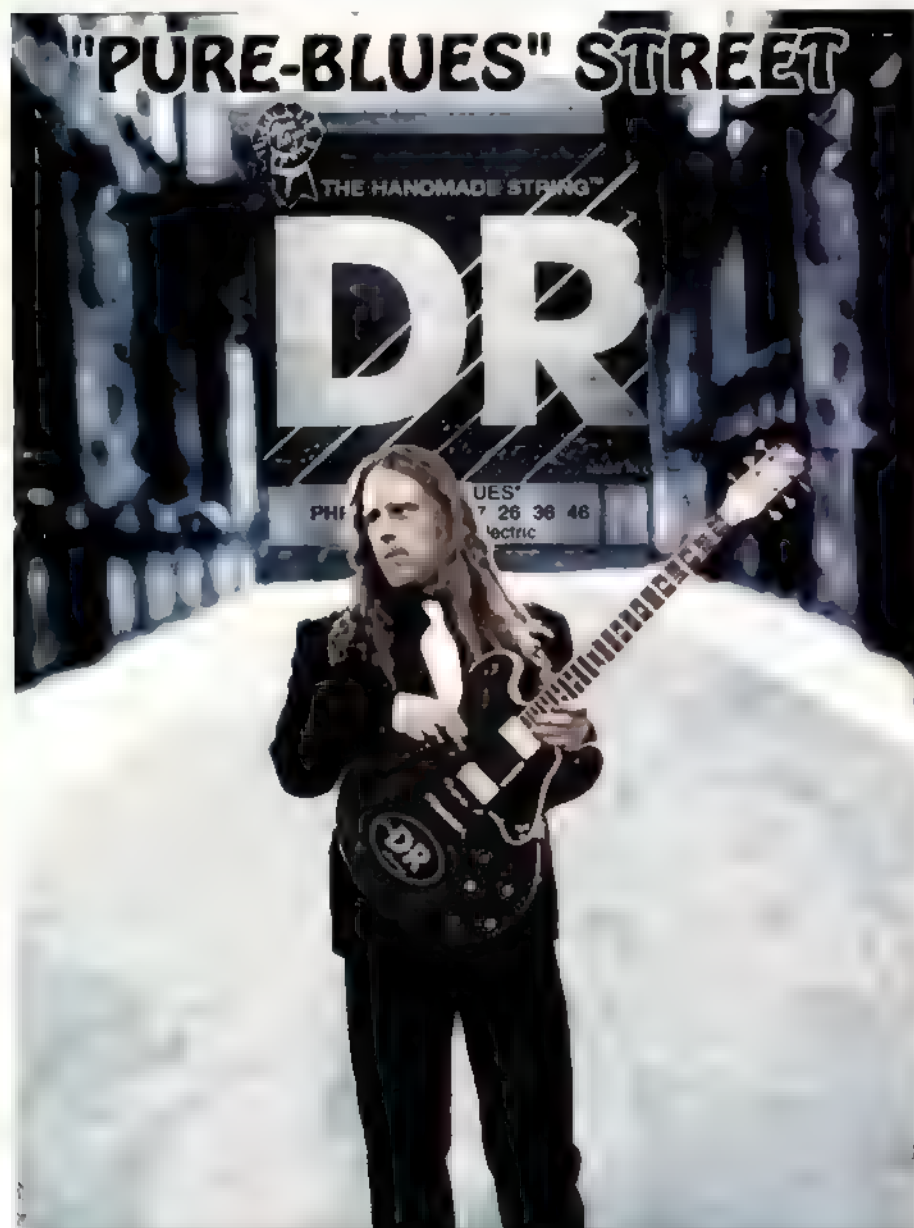
The Studio plays majestically and its intonation is flawless. The evenness in tone is due to both the body's internal construction and flex resistance of the modified dovetailed neck joint. The stability also comes from the two pieces of quarter-sawn matched walnut that comprise the neck—their grains oppose each other, making for extra rigidity. And having four of the Sperzel locking tuners on the top side of the

headstock allows the G and B strings to be longer overall, giving them a Strat-like bendability.

Although the Studio has three sizeable sound chambers beneath its maple top, it speaks with the articulate highs and punchy mids of a stellar solidbody such as a PRS McCarty or a Gibson Les Paul. And whether plugged into a Marshall JCM 800 or a Fender Twin Reverb, every pickup combination sings. Round sounding in the neck position, and sharp toothed in the bridge, the Kent Armstrong humbuckers are perfectly matched in output. Though you don't get Strat-like tones in positions two, three, and four, the Joe Barden twin-blade single-coil does add a dramatic, Fender-like sparkle, making the Studio a full-spectrum tone generator.

On a string of cover dates, the Studio proved amazingly versatile with a Groove Tubes Soul-O 75 combo. From decaffeinated smooth jazz to stinky funk, snarly rock to skanky Motown, swing jazz to jump blues, the Studio handled each genre with aplomb. In fact, during the entire month I test drove the Studio, I had but one concern—making sure I didn't leave so much as a scratch on this one-of-a-kind Rolls Royce with strings.

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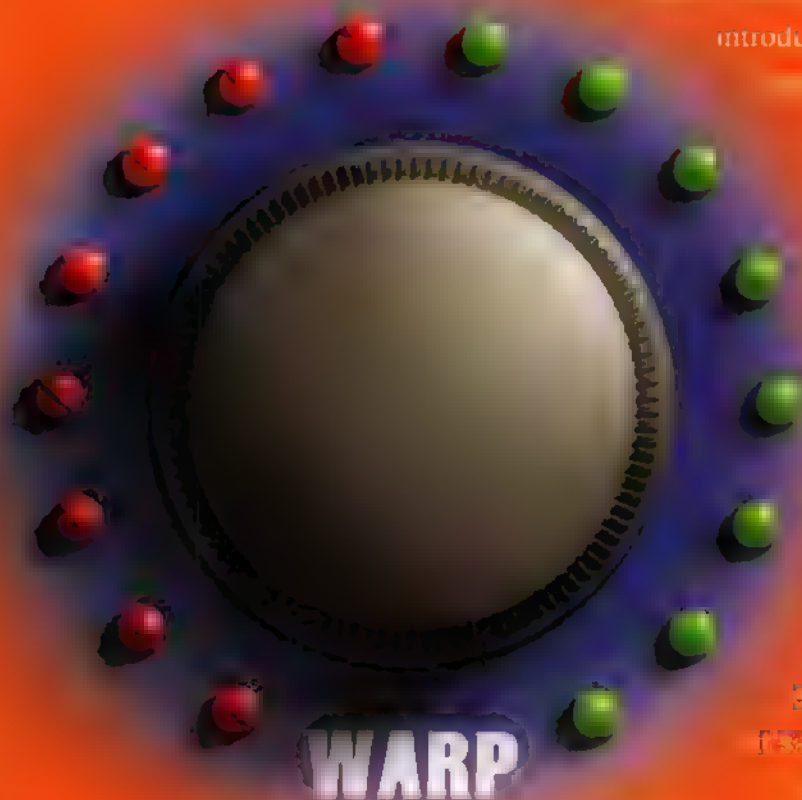
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## Bench Tests

# Crunch Bunch

Zoom Hyper Lead, Tri Metal, Power Drive, and Ultra Fuzz

By Joe Gore

**T**he undying love affair that guitarists have with analog effects has recently prompted Zoom—an acclaimed maker of digital guitar effects—to venture into the analog zone with four exciting new distortion pedals. But while these Japanese-made boxes are very much the straight-ahead crunch machines they appear to be, each stands apart from the retro-buzz pack. First, there's the look: sleek and futuristic, with a vibe closer to a Titanium Powerbook than

### Snapshot

Four exciting new distortion pedals: The Hyper Lead HL-01 (\$164) is a brash and flexible grind machine. The Tri Metal TM-01 (\$164) goes straight for the jugular with relentless distortion and thunderous lows. The Power Drive PD-01 (\$164) is a crisp and transparent clean overdrive pedal. And the Ultra Fuzz UF-01 (\$164) is mad noise bomb with some truly unique sounds. The Power Drive PD-01 and Ultra Fuzz UF-01 receive Editors' Pick Awards.





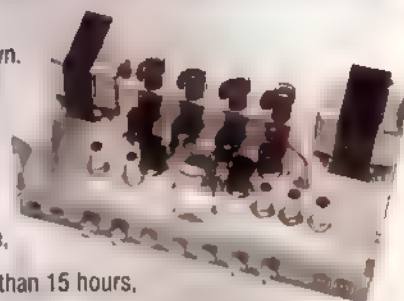
# Peacemaker

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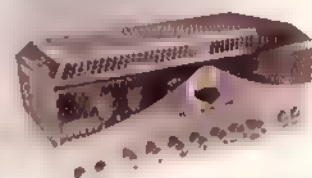
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# Bench Tests

## Crunch Punch

the Kustom Kar aesthetic favored by so many pedal designers. Except for their rubber floor pads and detachable battery covers (all run on a single 9-volt, or via an optional AC adapter), every surface is of smooth metal—even the knobs. All share a similar layout:

gain control on the lower left, level on the lower right, and a row of tone-shaping controls above. Nearly all the pedals generate massive quantities of gain, yet each is relatively low noise. We listened to them through various combo amps, a Marshall half-stack, and SansAmp and Line 6 amp simulators, using a Fender

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and Gibson equipped with a variety of single-coil and humbucking pickups.

## Hyper Lead HL-01

The Hyper Lead (\$164) offers the broadest distortion range of

the foursome—everything from modern-metal crunch to a low-burn drive that could pass muster at a blues gig. In addition to the usual gain, level, treble, and bass controls, there's a middle knob and a sweepable Range (frequency)

The Ratings Game	Tone	Workmanship	Vibe	Value
Zoom Hyper Lead HL-01	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Zoom Power Drive PD-01	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
Zoom Tri Metal TM-01	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Zoom Ultra Fuzz UF-01	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★

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## Crunch Bunch

control—a valuable pair of features that not only lets you dial in just the right amount of midrange cut or boost, but the pitch as well. There's a big palette here: peaky notched-wah tones, honking lead hues, sizzling death-metal scoops, and more.

The HL-01 doesn't get clean enough to serve as a non-distorting solo boost. Nor is it the most dynamic of fuzzes—when you roll back the guitar's volume, the tones get cleaner, but they also lose some body. The HL-01 really wants to grind, and it's going to appeal most to players who share that vision. The pedal's basic tone emphasizes fizzy highs and strong compression—actually, it's not far removed from some of Zoom's previous overdrive effects. The sparkly highs preserve definition and emphasize pick attack—notes seem to spit from the speakers. It's a great recipe for fast, tight metal riffs, and shred demons will probably dig how the compression facilitates speedy lead work. You can also generate formidable baritone and 7-string tones, especially when you carve out some mids. Anyone who tends to get frustrated by riffs that lose definition at high-gain settings ought to investigate this bright, punchy pedal.

## Power Drive PD-01

The Power Drive (\$164) is that rarest of birds: a true clean-toned solo boost. For whatever reason, few mass-market pedals perform this important function, so the PD-01 is a welcome arrival. The range of its treble, bass, and gain controls is extremely modest, which is precisely the point—the PD-01's forte is adding a touch of EQ, a smidgen of overdrive, and a hell of a lot of volume with minimal alteration to your basic tone.


With the level knob cranked and the gain at minimum, you get a pristine boost that rivals that of some expensive designer boost boxes. Another great tone: the same setting, but with extra lows dialed in—perfect for bulking up clean solos. Trimming the treble tames the razor edge of a Strat or Tele bridge pickup; goosing it lends extra slice to humbucker pickups. Wicking up the gain takes you to blues-rock land, but not all the way to metaldom—you'll need to use a separate distortion pedal if you want to chunk out.

The PD-01 does a few simple things exceedingly well. It's a great choice for anyone seeking a clean solo sound that will slice through a mix, but not your listeners' eardrums. It's a superb baritone-guitar and 6-string bass-driver, and blues players are likely to love the way it coaxes a righteous sweat from small combo amps. Kudos.

## Tri Metal TM-01

The control layout of the Tri Metal (\$164) is identical to that of the Hyper Lead, and it dishes up a related blend of compressed crunch and crispy attack. But its attitude is a lot nastier. Think of it as an HL-01 with more nose rings and

*Continued on page 150*




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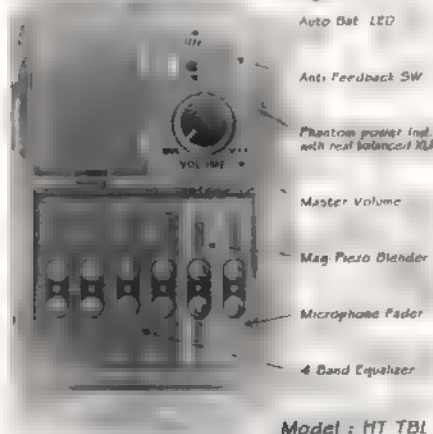


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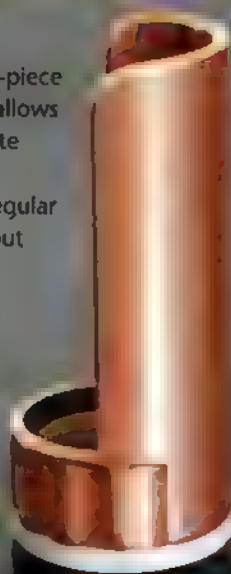
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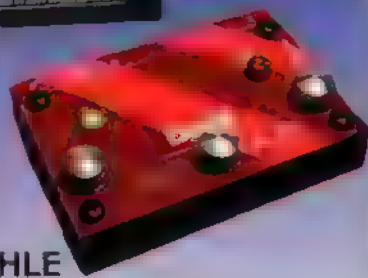
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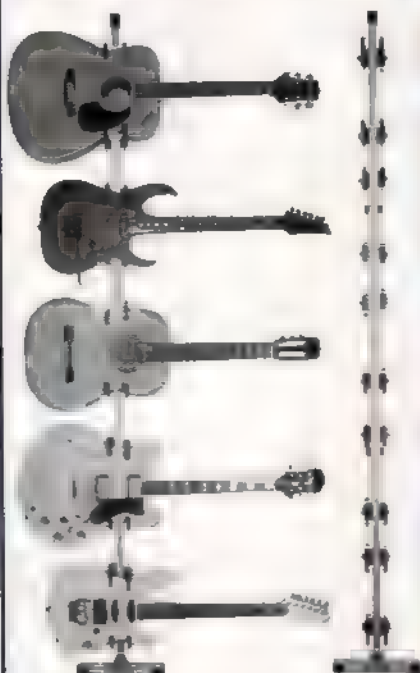
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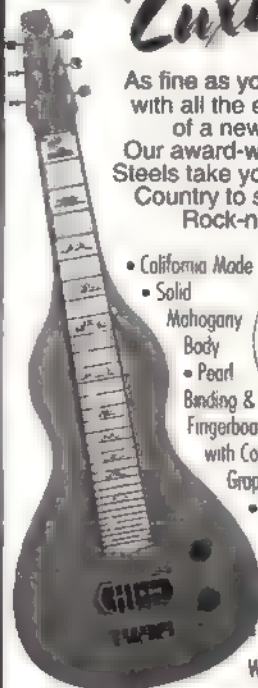
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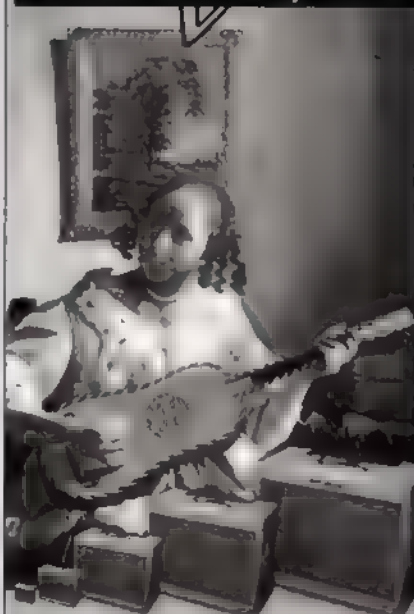


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## Pedal Power

BY JUDE GOLD



**IF YOU'RE LIKE MOST GUITARISTS**, you'll love the huge, jangling sound of the progression in Ex. 1a. It gets its magic from droning open *B* and *E* pedal tones—*upper* pedals, in this case—that ring vibrantly in each chord. These drone tones transform an ordinary I-IV-

V progression into the musical workhorse that has carried a million campfire jams and countless rock radio songs. But this is just one way pedal tones can make a progression come alive. A good player should know several others.

As popular as Ex. 1a's progression is, it does have a striking limitation: It has no *minor*

chords. Without sacrificing our beloved *B*- and *E*-string drones, Ex. 1b adds *IIIm*, *IVm*, and *VIm* flavors to our palette. Once you have these new fingerings nailed (and can mute the fifth string with the underside of your 1st finger), you'll be able to strum these chords as freely as you do their major siblings. Finally, closing out our upper-pedal workout, make sure you have some "slash" chords in your arsenal—chords that don't have their roots in the bass (Ex. 1c).

Because pedal tones get their name from the foot pedals that activate the lowest notes on church organs, a true pedal is lower in pitch than the notes in the chords above it, as is the *A* pedal in Ex. 2a. With the fifth string acting as a drone bass, three-note chords up and down the fretboard suddenly sound striking and full—especially if you add a droning high *E* string to each chord. (Now you have simultaneous upper *and* lower pedals!) We achieve

Ex. 1a

Freely (I) E (IV) Aadd9 (V) Badd11 Aadd9

Ex. 1b

Freely Fmaj7#11 (IIIm) F#m11 G6 E/G# (IVm) Am add9 Aadd9 Badd11 Cmaj7 (VIm) C#m7 etc



Ex. 1c

Freely Badd11/D# Bm add11/D Aadd9/C# Am add9/C Badd11 E/G# Em/G F#11 Fmaj7#11 E

even more jangle in the minor-flavored Ex. 2b, by cloning the high E with its twin pitch at the 5th fret of the second string.

Now, let's look at open-string pedals that lie *within* chords, such as the one Jimi Hendrix made popular with songs

such as "Little Wing" and "Castles Made of Sand" (Ex. 3a). Arc your fretting-hand fingers, and the G-string pedal will ring endlessly. Take inspiration from Hendrix and come up with your own internal-pedal progressions, like the one in Ex. 3b.

Here, beautiful chords orbit around an open B pedal.

Finally, try using capos and custom tunings as you explore the world of pedal tones. Add a little creativity and that world will become an ever-expanding universe. ■

#### Ex. 2a

Freely A E/A Am7 Dadd9/A Bbmaj7#11/A Am7 A

0 10 11 0  
0 0 0 0  
0 0 0 0  
0 0 0 0  
0 0 0 0  
0 0 0 0



#### Ex. 2b

Freely Am E/A Am7b9 Dadd9/A Dm add9/A

0 0 0 0  
0 0 0 0  
0 0 0 0  
0 0 0 0  
0 0 0 0  
0 0 0 0

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#### Ex. 3a

Freely G5add9 C5add9 F5add9 G5add9 Bb8add9

let (3) ring throughout  
th. on (5)

5 8 10 3 2 5  
0 0 0 1 0 3  
0 0 0 1 0 3  
0 0 0 1 0 3  
0 0 0 1 0 3  
0 0 0 1 0 3

\* th. = thumb



#### Ex. 3b

Freely B F#add4/A# Aadd9 E/G# Em/G F#add4 Eadd9 F#add4

let (2) ring throughout

7 0 7 7 7 2 2 2  
0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0  
0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0  
0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0  
0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0  
0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

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BY HOWARD ROBERTS



### HERE ARE SOME WAYS

to break old fretboard habits and create an infinite amount of new ones. The following shapes are extremely useful as passing patterns for moving from one tonal point to another (think of them as melodic equivalents to passing chords). Apply these patterns in organized ways—and make sure they resolve on expected chord tones or key centers—and the dissonances they create will be outweighed by smooth, musical-sounding resolutions.

Shapes of this sort are excellent vehicles for improvising because they are organized (Ex. 1), structured (Ex. 2), and connected melodically (Examples 3 and 4). Reminder: Don't forget to

try different string, fret, picking, and fingering combinations.

Examples 5, 6, 7, and 8 suggest some experimental shape combinations. For Ex. 9, make up your own paths, and for Ex. 10, create your own geometric shapes within the notes. In Ex. 11, there are two long "V" shapes. Try changing directions at either juncture. Examples 12, 13, and 14 deal with some very fundamental horizontal, vertical, diagonal, triangle, and parallelogram shapes. After you get them down, try experimenting with less symmetrical shapes.

The whole idea is to play *with* your guitar, have fun *with* your guitar, and always be creative *with* your guitar. It is only an extension of you. Never lose a sense of humor about what you are doing.



The late, great jazz master Howard Roberts wrote nearly 200 columns for GP. This one was originally published in December, 1975.

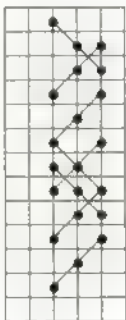
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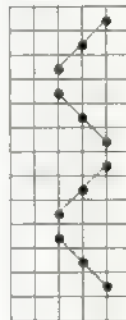
Ex. 2



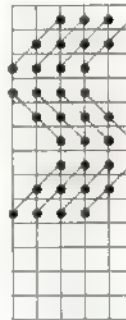
Ex. 3



Ex. 4



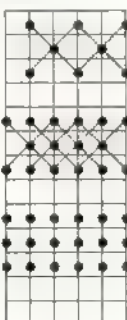
Ex. 5



Ex. 6



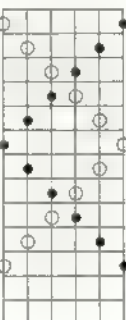
Ex. 7



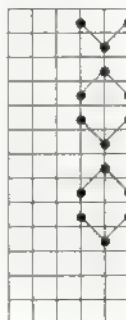
Ex. 10



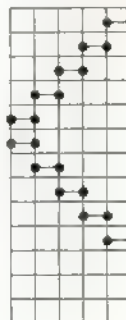
Ex. 11



Ex. 12



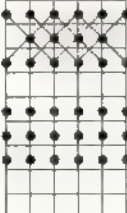
Ex. 13



Ex. 14



Ex. 8



Ex. 9



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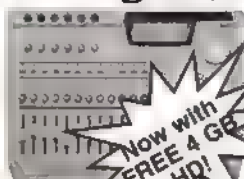
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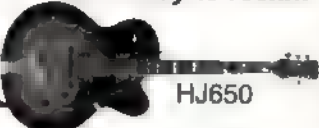
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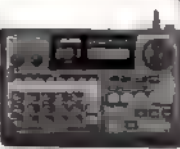
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## Tremolo Technique

BY FRANK VIGNOLA



**WHETHER YOU WANT TO** dazzle audiences with energized strum solos—or just add fluttery sustain to melodies and chords—you need a strong tremolo technique. Don't worry—like a drummer working up his paradiddle, you can get your tremolo up to speed by practicing it regularly for just a few minutes

a day. In just a few months, you'll be flying.

The concept of tremolo is simple: Rapidly strike a note or chord with alternating strokes of your pick to create a dramatic sustaining effect. To embark on your journey toward better tremolo, set your metronome at a modest tempo and play the pentatonic melody in Ex. 1a. Now play Ex. 1b. It's the same lick, but you've

added an upstroke to each note, and are now playing eighth-notes. This is the first hint of tremolo. In Ex. 1c, we double our strokes yet again, playing each pitch in sixteenth-notes. Finally, with your metronome set at a tempo you can handle, try playing the melody in thirty-second-notes (eight strokes per pitch). Practice this enough, and you won't be thinking sub-

**Ex. 1a** G7 **Ex. 1b**

**Ex. 1c** **Ex. 1d**



**Ex. 2a** G **Ex. 2b** G G#dim7 Am7 A#dim7 Gmaj7

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divisions anymore, you'll only be thinking *tremolo*. To indicate tremolo on the staff, we simply put slashes through the stem of each note (Ex. 1d).

The other half of tremolo attack involves chords. As you did with Ex. 1a's simple melody, apply tremolo in stages to the simple G chord in Ex. 2a. Realize that strumming hard is actually counterproductive because it expands your picking radius, which

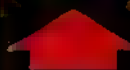
slows you down. Just as a hummingbird can flap its wings impossibly fast, you can maximize the rate of your tremolo with a narrow "wingspan." Once you are cozy with Ex. 2a, try applying tremolo to the chords in Ex. 2b for a spectacular rising effect.

Remember, there's no wrong way to hold your pick, and whether you're putting tremolo on chords or single notes, concentrate on making each stroke even in attack,

tone, and volume. Play these exercises a little bit faster each day, and one morning soon you'll wake up with a great tremolo.

*Frank Vignola has worked with Les Paul, Mark O'Connor, Herb Ellis, Madonna, Ringo Starr, Wynton Marsalis, and Leon Redbone. Check him out at study-withfrank.com.*

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skull tattoos. The Tri Metal couldn't care less about subtle, in-between tones and sensitive dynamic response—it just wants to burn.

For starters, the TM-01 is insanely loud, with enough lard-assed lows to send your downstairs neighbors scrambling for the shotgun. And that's before you plug-in a 7-string or baritone guitar. We're talking darkest-bowels-of-the-abysms here. While there's not as much tonal variety as on the Hyper Lead, you can concoct some hip variations on the basic sledgehammer tones, including tweaked-out, peaky-midrange colors. Modern metal players are going to love this fat-bottomed fuzz bomb.

### Ultra Fuzz UF-01

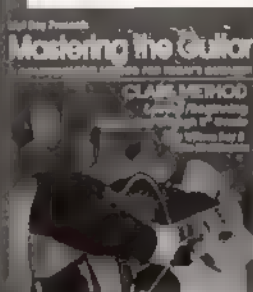
The Ultra Fuzz (\$164) is definitely the freak of the litter. You might think of it as a middle ground between the Hyper Lead and designer gonzo-fuzzes of the Z. Vex or Prescription Electronics ilk. It also boasts some nasty new tricks all its own. The quirkiness starts with the controls: There's a single tone control (a color knob that fades between a chunky, metal-tinged fuzz and a more vintage, honking-mid flavor), a variable gate, and a Reso knob that dials in jagged midrange resonance. The tone and color controls work beautifully together—there are lots of cool variations here. The UF-01 is a great over-dubber's pedal because you can spin the knobs until you get just the right color and midrange emphasis to suit a mix.

At lower settings, the whacked-out Reso control adds an abstract, modern edge. Maxed out, it screeches into self-oscillation. The manual compares the effect to "the sound of the legendary Theremin," but it's more like an ambulance full of banshees skidding across a giant blackboard before crashing into an air raid siren factory and setting off every car alarm in the area. Yes, it's that cool. The sickest part is, once the pedal starts to shriek, some of the other controls modify the pitch and timbre, as does switching pickups or tweaking your volume control. Furthermore, the gate control does more than nix noise when you're not playing. At higher settings it alters note attack—you can get those pseudo-backward swells and dying-transistor crackles beloved by certain avant-gardists. But be forewarned that results vary according to pickup type. I made lots of wild noises with single-coils, P90s, and humbuckers, but each yielded very different sounds.

The UF-01 excels as a straightforward, metal-edged fuzz, so you don't have to deploy it as a blood-curdling anarchy box. But it seems a shame not to, since the only other pedal I know of that can stir up this particular sort of trouble is the Z. Vex Fuzz Factory. Take my word for it: This baby is guaranteed to put you on great terms with the bride's family at your next wedding gig.

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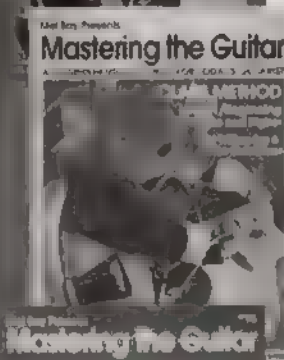
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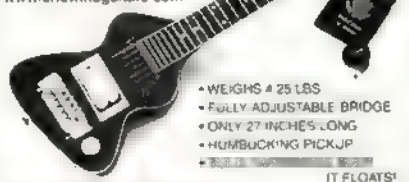
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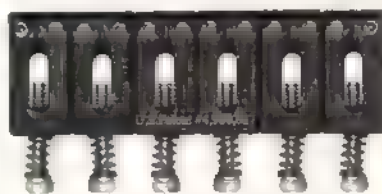
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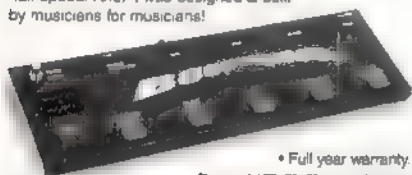
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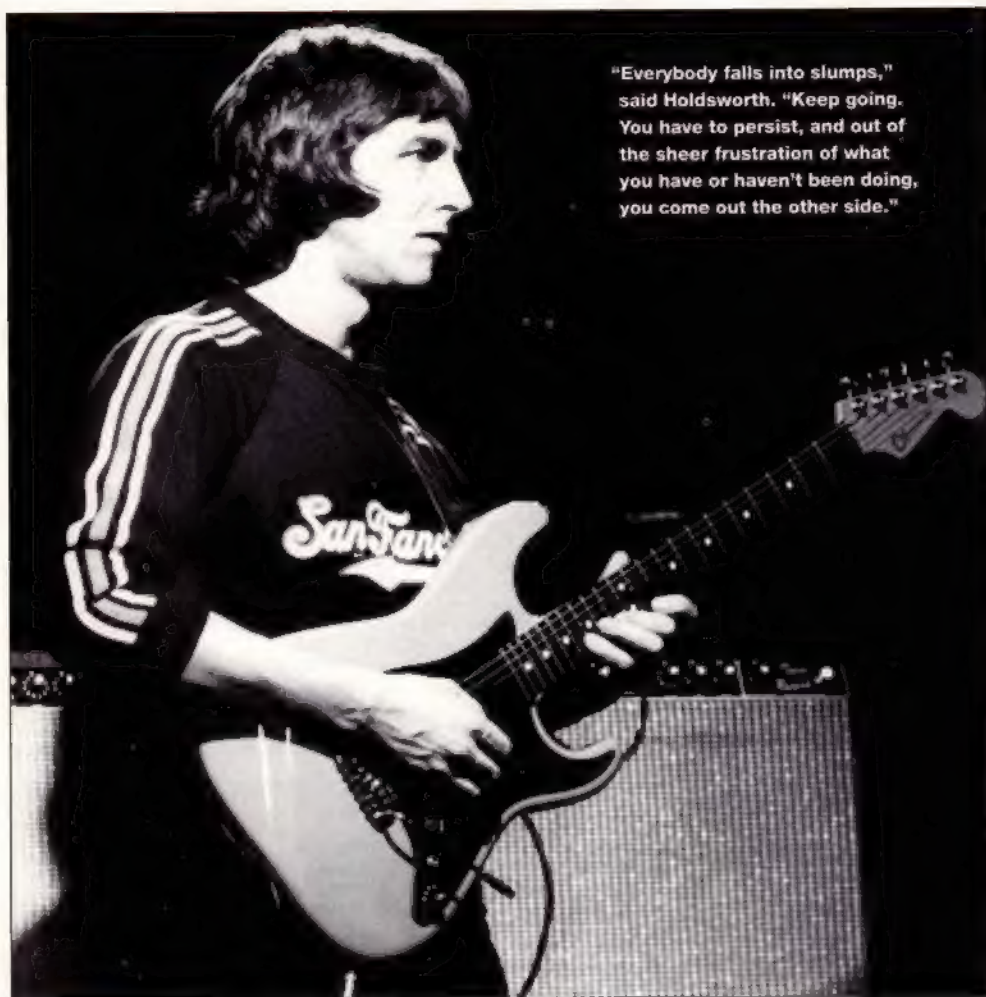
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"Everybody falls into slumps," said Holdsworth. "Keep going. You have to persist, and out of the sheer frustration of what you have or haven't been doing, you come out the other side."



## Guitar Player, December 1982—

Despite virtual invisibility in the pop music world at

large, Allan Holdsworth, through his unique sound and strongly independent approach, has become a touchstone for many guitarists. Among lead players, "Allan Holdsworth" has elevated to a buzzword—if you want to perk up ears, he's the one to listen to.

Although no artist is utterly without influences, some—such as Chuck Berry, Eric Clapton, Jimi Hendrix, and John McLaughlin—infuse their work with so much originality that

they create whole new styles. Holdsworth can be added to the list. While he hasn't achieved the worldwide commercial success of the others, his musical voice is so unique it may best be defined in terms of itself. He originated what has become the Allan Holdsworth school of guitar playing.

• • • • •

*Do you purposely avoid playing common rock or blues licks?*

In a word, yes. I occasionally use them if I'm in a particularly jovial mood. Sometimes I'll be caught doing it just for fun. Usually, I try to avoid them; I try to avoid *everything*. I'm still looking, basically.

*Where did your wide fret-*

*ting-hand stretches come from?*

Most of the time, when guitarists play over a certain chord, they play the scale so that the notes are played consecutively. I wanted to avoid that by playing intervals that were spaced further apart. They're the same scales and chords, it's just that I want them to be juggled around more—I'm just juggling, really.

*What made you leave the SG behind for the Stratocaster?*

The big difference for me was putting humbuckers on the Strat. From then on, I couldn't go back. I've tried a couple of times, because I love SGs—they're definitely my favorite guitars. I love the way they play and look. But after

playing the Strat, there was just something missing in their sound—some of the *heart*, the upper harmonics.

*And then recently, why did you switch again—from the Strat to Charvel guitars?*

I was really lucky because just before I sold my Stratocaster, I met [Charvel luthier/designer] Grover Jackson in London. We went out for a few beers and he was willing to listen to ideas that I had about certain woods. A lot of other people would say, "You can't make a guitar from this wood or that wood," but Grover listened to everything, and he made me three Strat-style guitars from various woods. I'm really happy with them—they're the best guitars I've ever owned. The wood gives so much to the sound, just like in an acoustic guitar, whereas if the body is really heavy, it just sort of soaks the sound up, and you're left with a string talking down to the pickup.

*Do you listen to your old material on records to gauge your progress?*

Oh, no! That's why I'm pretty confident about my progress, because when I listen to my old stuff, I just die. I can't believe it. It sounds like a cave-man or a baby—just so primitive and so long ago and unbearable.

*Do you think you might be too self-critical?*

I don't think so. Maybe I am. *Maybe*. But I don't think so. But that's the way I am, and I can't do anything about it.

*Excerpted from the December, 1982 GP interview with Allan Holdsworth by Tom Mulhern.*





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Whale image courtesy of The Cousteau Society

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